

# A Bible Study on 1 John - The First Epistle of John

## Introduction

### 1 **Where and when** did John write this letter?

St John wrote the book in Ephesus, most likely in the years A.D. 90 – 95, just before his death.

The first Christian community in Ephesus was established by St. John. In 64, after St Paul was decapitated outside the city wall of Rome, John again became the leader of the Ephesians church community.

Paul had begun the work at Ephesus during A.D 54-57. *“while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus “ Acts 19:1*

In spite of his old age, St John went around Asia Minor together with St Peter to spread Christianity. He was tried to be killed two times; a glass of poisonous drink was given him but with a miracle poison came out in the form of a snake when St John was ready to drink it and also he was exiled to Island of Patmos where he wrote his Apocalypse. In 95 CE he returned to Ephesus and started writing his Gospel. St John died in Ephesus and according to his will, he was buried nearby Ephesus. All his words and Gospel still live today.

The letter was written to the church in general and not to any specific community.

### 2 **What is this letter about?**

**The main theme** of this letter is Fellowship with God and Fellowship and with each other.

**The sub themes** that run through the book are to teach how to enjoy delightful fellowship with God, as God is Light, God is Love and God is Life.

Overall, John wrote the letter: **to promote fellowship,** **to produce happiness,**  
**to protect holiness,** **to prevent heresy,** **to provide hope.**

### 3 **The value of the book in terms of salvation**

I have notice that this book of 1 John provides a sort of 10 point checklist for believers, to check and see if they are believers, as Paul suggested in 2 Corinthians 13:5-6.

*“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.”*

Q 1. In terms of timing, how much different is John’s writings to other Gospels?

Q 2. Why is this book important to know and live in the Christian life?

Q 3. How is this book connected with our salvation?

Do you have this knowledge? Check each other out.

# 1 John Chapter 1

## Introduction

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

Q 1. Who is John writing about here? Q 2. To what period of time is he referring? Q 3. Pick out 2 key words in these 4 verses.	Do you have this knowledge? Check each other out.
--	---

## Walking in the light

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Q 1. What does it mean “to walk in darkness?” Q 2. How possible is it to walk in the light 24/7? Q 3. How can we know victory in Christ? Q 4. What is the ultimate evidence of our Christianity?	Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.
---	--

## Confession of sin

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

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

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

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

2.2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Q 1. If we know Jesus highlights perfection as a lifestyle, how is it that John says we still sin? ( <i>Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect Matthew 5:48</i> )	Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.
---	--

<p>Q 2. Compare and contrast 1 John 1:8 to 1 John 3:9 which says, <i>“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”</i></p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
--	---

### Obedience to His Commandments

- 2.3. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.
- 2.4. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- 2.5. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.
- 2.6. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

<p>Q 1. What does the term “know Him” mean?  Q 2. How important is verse 2:4? Why?  Q 3. What is the connection between obedience, truth and abiding?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

### Love one another

- 2.7. Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard [from the beginning.](#)
- 2.8. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.
- 2.9. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.
- 2.10. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
- 2.11. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
- 2.12. I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.
- 2.13. I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.
- 2.14. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* 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 wicked one.

<p>Q 1. What is the new commandment in 2:8?  Q 2. What are the connections between love, hate, light and darkness?  Q 3. What are the three stages of the Christian life? How different are they?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

## Love of the world.

2.15. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2.16. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

2.17. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Q 1. Is the assertion in 2:15 as simple as John states it? Why or why not?

Q 2. In the negative sense, what does lust and pride have to do with modern life?

Q 3. What can a true believer do, to avoid lust and pride? Is it intellectual knowledge and/or spiritual awareness and knowing?

Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.

## Spirit of the Antichrist

2.18. Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

2.19. They 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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

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

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

2.22. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

2.23. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

2.24. Therefore 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.

2.25. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

2.26. These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you.

2.27. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Q 1. Is the term Antichrist, a particular person, or a theme of life?

Q 2. What do you make of the term – “but they were not of us” in 2:19?

Q 3. What does anointing mean? How much present is it in us?

Q 4. What is the importance of “denial” in 2:22. What is its significance in these days?

Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.

<p>Q 5. What is the connection between Jesus and the Father in 2:23?</p> <p>Q 6. What is the connection between “teaching” “anointing” and “abiding”?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

## Purity of life

2.28. And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

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

3.1. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

3.2. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3.3. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

<p>Q 1. What is the connection between purity and righteousness?</p> <p>Q 2. What is another way of saying, “not be ashamed before Him at His coming?”</p> <p>Q 3. What are the differences between a child of God and an unbeliever?</p> <p>Q 4. Do you agree with John when he wrote, “it has not yet been revealed what we shall be,” Discuss.</p> <p>Q 5. What is the connection between “our hope” and purity?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

## Practice of righteousness

3.4. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

3.5. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

3.6. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

3.7. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

3.8. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

3.9. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

3.10. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

3.11. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

3.12. not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

<p>Q 1. What is your attitude towards the commandments ? ( the 10 and the 2)</p> <p>Q 2. Read 3:6 and 3:9 and compare and contrast with 1:8.</p> <p>Q 3. What is John meaning here when he writes "He who practices righteousness is righteous"?</p> <p>Q 4. Do you believe this statement in 3.8? He who sins is of the devil,</p> <p>Q 5. Do you fully believe 3:10? What are the consequences for those who say they believe?</p> <p>Q 6. How many repetitions have you noticed in John's writing so far? Why does he write like that?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

### Love is deed and truth

3.13. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

3.14. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.

3.15. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

3.16. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

3.17. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

3.18. My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

3.19. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

3.20. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

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

3.23. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus

3.24. Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

<p>Q 1. What message does God send to us in 3:14?</p> <p>Q 2. What is the evidence of eternal life spoken of here?</p> <p>Q 3. On what 2 commandments hang all the law and the prophets?</p> <p>Q 4. What is the test of union life in this book? What scriptures or phrases would you use?</p> <p>Q 5. Given all of this, how are we to respond to the overwhelming human need in the world today?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

## Testing the Spirits

- 4.1. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- 4.2. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,
- 4.3. and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.
- 4.4. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
- 4.5. They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them.
- 4.6. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Q 1. How many spirits are there? Or other influences?<br/>Q 2. What does John mean by "Test the spirits"?<br/>Q 3. Is there anything possible wrong in 4:2 and 4:3?<br/>Q 4. "He who knows God hears us;" 4:6 is a strong statement. How do we handle it in life?<br/>Q 5. What is missing in 4:5 and 4:6? How can we handle life in view of those statements?</p> | <p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p> |
|---|---|

## Love as Christ loves

- 4.7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- 4.8. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- 4.9. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.
- 4.10. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.
- 4.11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- 4.12. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.
- 4.13. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.
- 4.14. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world.
- 4.15. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
- 4.16. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
- 4.17. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.
- 4.18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.
- 4.19. We love Him because He first loved us.
- 4.20. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not

love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

4.21. And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

5.1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

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

5.3. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

<p>Q 1. In 4.1. what is the relationship between “love” “knows” and born of God. Can unbelievers love?</p> <p>Q 2. What has “begotten son” got to do with “love” and “life”?</p> <p>Q 3. What has loving God got to do with loving each other”</p> <p>Q 4. Who is the “we” in 4:14? What is the value of the verse?</p> <p>Q 5. In 4:17, what is the profoundness of “as He is, so are we in this world.”</p> <p>Q 6. Provide an explanation for 4:20.</p> <p>Q 7. Is 4:21 a legalism of a Spirit led activity?</p> <p>Q8. In 5:3. Do you agree with God that His commandments are not burdensome? What would make them burdensome?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
---	---

### Victory over the world

5.4. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

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

<p>Q 1. What are the connections between overcoming, victory, being born again, and faith?</p> <p>Q 2. In our lives, what elements of life prevent us from overcoming? How might we improve?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
--	---

### Assurance of salvation

5.6. This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

5.7. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

5.8. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

5.9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

5.10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

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

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

5.13. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God.

<p>Q 1. In 5:6 what does the reference to water and blood mean?</p> <p>Q 2. Is 5:8 different to 5:6? Explain.</p> <p>Q 3. What does this mean in 5:9 <i>"If we receive the witness of men."</i> How is it different from God's witness?</p> <p>Q 4. What is the assurance of salvation in 5:10</p> <p>Q 5. In 5:10, what is the witness that God has given of His Son?</p> <p>Q 6. In 5:11, what is the importance of the underlined word - <u>IN</u>?</p> <p>Q 7. How would you summarize 5:11 and 5:12?</p> <p>Q 8. What are the three key words in 5:13? Why?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
--	---

### Guidance in prayer

5.14. Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

5.15. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

5.16. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does not lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

5.17. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

<p>Q 1. What are the 5 key words in 5:14-15? How successful are we in this? Why or why not?</p> <p>Q 2. After upholding prayer in 4:14 and 15, John the poses an apparent puzzle. What is a sin not leading to death &amp; what is a sin leading to death? Why pray for one and not the other?</p> <p>Q 3. What is sin not leading to death?</p>	<p>Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.</p>
--	---

## Freedom from habitual sin

5.18. We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

5.19. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

5.20. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, 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.

5.21. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Q 1. In 5:18 How can John write that first phrase, when we know we sometimes sin?

Q 2. Is 5:19 a black and white statement? Why? What does it mean for you? Me?

Q 3. How many eternal truths are there in 5:20? Name them, then Link them.

Q 4. John's last thought is intriguing. What sort of idols is he referring to?

Put into practice any repentance, confession or prayer required.

## Finally

Imagine John sitting in front of you and asking you these questions – what would be your answers. Write these out during the week before the last lesson

1 What are 3 or 4 of the most important lessons in this book of 1 John?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Where do you personally lack in the practice of these?

.....  
.....

What are you going to do about each of these?

.....  
.....

2 Which of these relationships could you do better on? How?

With God? .....

With each other? .....

3 In lots of verses in this book, John is black and white about who is a believer and who is not. How can this issue be handled with those who don't meet John's standards, yet confess their belief?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4 Consider each of these concepts – and be ready to discuss your knowledge and practice of them.

Walking in the light	Confession of sin	Obedience to Word
Loving one another	Not loving the world	Assurance of salvation
Purity of life	Practice of righteousness	Loving in deed and truth
Distinguishing between spirits	Loving as Christ loved	Victory over the world
Guidance in prayer	Freedom from habitual sins	

**Take care now of any repentance, confession or prayer required.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Ken Walker*

waveplace13@tpg.com.au

Sunday, 2 August 2015

This study will be placed on [www.fullnessoflifeinchrist.com](http://www.fullnessoflifeinchrist.com) late in 2015