



LIFE IN THE LIGHT

5 Studies in 1 John
For individuals, small groups, and 1:1

Welcome to 1 John, “Life in the Light”

If you're using these studies in a **Bible Study Group**, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a **Bible Study Group Leader** please don't feel that your group needs to answer every question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from slightly different perspectives. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies **individually**, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you - with God's people - might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading:

The Letters of John Tyndale NT Commentary, John Stott.
John's Letters, Bible Speaks Today, David Jackman.
Life in God, Martyn Lloyd-Jones
1 - 3 John video Intro from The Bible Project. See Study 1

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Study 1

1 John 1:1 - 2:6

1. What makes it easier for you to believe someone when they're telling you something?
What gets in the way of you believing?

2. Have you ever been in complete and utter darkness?
What do you remember of the situation?
How did you feel when you were once again in the light?

3. Watch the Letters of John introductory video from The Bible Project.
Watch on YouTube: youtu.be/I3QkE6nKyIM

Read 1 John 1:1 - 2:6

4. Why do you think John is so deliberate and explicit in describing his experience of Jesus?

5. Why is the description "the Word of life" (1:11) such an appropriate title for Jesus?

6. Can you think of other occasions in Scripture where God's essence or character is described with the language "God is ..."?

Make a list of any such references you can recall.

Here's a few to start, Psalm 46:1, John 4:24, Galatians 3:20, Hebrews 12:29

7. What does John mean when he says, "God is light"?

8. What mistaken ideas about God are corrected with an understanding of God as "light"?

9. Reflecting on this section, what do you think it means to live your "life in the light"

- Among God's people at church

- With your non-Christian friends

- In your local community

10. Conversely, what are the signs that some of our steps might be "in darkness"?

11. How would you summarise 2:1 - 2 without using any Christian jargon or technical terms?

12. John alludes to the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (2:12, see Leviticus 16). How is that yearly sacrifice for sin under the Old Covenant an encouragement to people today who find themselves sinning?

13. What are the spiritual truths that drive the behaviour exhortations in this section?

14. Why is it so important for spiritual truths to come first and exhortations to behaviour following?

Read John 1:1 - 18

15. What are the similarities and differences between 1 John 1:1 - 7 and the introduction to John's gospel account?

16. How might these differences reflect differing purposes behind each document?
See also John 20:30 - 31 where John states his purpose in writing his gospel account.

17. How is “live as Jesus did” a better exhortation, than the popular question, “what would Jesus do?”

18. What do you find gets in the way of living as Jesus did?

19. What encouragement is there here for you when you stumble and sin?

Study 2

1 John 2:18 - 27

1. What people or things have you heard referred to as “the antichrist”?

What characteristics do these seem to have in common?

2. Which bits of the Christian message do you think someone must believe in order to be a Christian?

Read 1 John 2:18 - 27

3. What does John say is the mark of the antichrist?

4. In what way does someone “who denies that Jesus is the Christ” (v 22):

- Deny the Father?

- Deny the Son?

5. How is it different to be aware of “many antichrists” as opposed to the popular perception of waiting for just one antichrist?

6. John is writing to a church community which has seen a number of its members leave. Does verse 19 suggest that it's never OK to leave a church?

7. What does it mean to acknowledge the Son (v 24)?

8. How is it that John can say “whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (v 23)?

9. How does John say we can recognise someone who is a real Christian?

10. Which parts of this passage give an indication of the content of the false teaching of those who had gone out from among the recipients of this letter.

11. Are you aware of any people or movements today or either explicitly or implicitly deny “that Jesus is the Christ”? How does that denial express itself?

12. What does the outworking of denying that Jesus is the Christ look like in someone's life?

13. Imagine a friend says to you, "I believe Jesus was a good teacher and a wise man, but I can't accept that he is God." How does this section of 1 John help frame your response?

14. What steps do you take to try and determine if someone's teaching or example is likely to lead you away from the truth of the gospel?

15. How would you seek to help different people apply this section:

- Someone who denied the uniqueness of Jesus.

- A believer anxious that their faith is not real enough.

Study 3

1 John 2:28 - 3:24

1. What aspect of your character, personality, or behaviour do you think you have inherited from your parents?
What aspect do others see in you?

2. If you have children, what character traits or behavioural habits do you hope your children inherit or pick up from you?

3. In what way do you most like to receive expressions of love?

4. In what ways do you most enjoy demonstrating your love for someone close to you?

Read 1 John 2:28 - 3:24

5. How many different motivations or exhortations to right behaviour can you identify in these verses?

6. What are the characteristics of “children of God” (3:2) that we already have?

7. What is it then that we hope for, that has “not yet been made known” (3:2)?

8. What does John say ongoing habits of sin reveal about a person?

9. What are some of the ways in which the world demonstrates it does not understand Christians and the Christian message?

10. How can the life and ministry of Jesus be described as being “to destroy the devil’s work?”

11. If the devil’s work has been destroyed, how come people still sin?

12. How is loving other Christians evidence that “we have passed from death to life” (3:14)?

13. How would you finish this statement: “I love others because...”

14. How does the indwelling of the Spirit of God remind us of our relationship with God?

15. If you knew Jesus was returning tomorrow, how would that affect the plans you've made for the day?

16. What does John tell us that gives us confidence to stand before God?

Study 4

1 John 4:1 - 6

1. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is extremely gullible and 10 is intensely cynical?

2. Have you ever found yourself conned by someone else?
How did it make you feel?
In the long-run, did it matter?

3. What are some of the ideas about Jesus' identity and mission held by people you know?

Read 1 John 4:1 - 6

4. How are John's readers to know whether those claiming to be prophets (v 1) speak for God or not?

5. What does it mean to acknowledge "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"?

See Mark 5:1 - 7 for an episode that might shape your understanding.

6. How does what we've seen so far in 1 John about the outworking of right doctrine shape our understanding of what it means to acknowledge "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"?

7. Jesus himself promised that “many false prophets will appear and deceive many people” (Matthew 24:11). Why do you think people are so susceptible to false teaching?

8. Are there any indications in this section about the content of the false teaching that has so disturbed the church to which John is writing?

9. Someone asks you, “How does the Spirit of God demonstrate the reality of God in your life?” How do you respond?

10. What do the words of assurance in verse 4 “You ... have overcome them” mean?

11. What advantage do we have over the original recipients of this letter, living as we do after the completion of the canon of Scripture, ie after the Bible has been completed?

12. What steps can we take to guard against false teachers and the “spirit of falsehood” (v 6)?

13. How does the description of Christians “we are from God” (v 6) make you feel about yourself?

14. Does that description motivate you to any action or behaviour?

Study 5

1 John 4:7 - 5:21

1. How many popular songs can you think of that mention “love”?

What attitudes about love do they reflect?

2. If you had to define “love” as it’s characterised in modern culture, what would you come up with?

Read 1 John 4:7 - 21

3. Make a list of all the observations John makes about God’s love.

4. What do you think it means for God’s love “to be made complete in us” (4:12, and see also 4:17)?

5. What do you find most challenging or confronting in this section?

6. In contrast to your earlier definition, write a definition of love shaped by this section of Scripture.

Read 1 John 5:1 - 21

7. What is the relationship between belief, love and obedience in 5: 1 - 12?

8. In what ways is this similar or different to your general understanding of obedience?

9. What do you think it means to show our love for God by loving “his child as well” (5:1)?

10. How can believing “that Jesus is the Son of God” (5:5) be the means of overcoming the world?

11. The word translated “testimony” or “witness” occurs nine times in verses 6 - 12, where “the water and the blood” refer to Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion. What is the message of this testimony?

12. How does God the Father testify about Jesus?

13. How does the Spirit of God testify about Jesus?

14. What does it mean when we pray, to “ask anything according to his will” (5:14)?

15. What do you think is implied by the use of the present tense “we know that we have” in 5:15?

16. Do you remember what aspect of someone’s testimony about Jesus first made you put your trust in him? How has your understanding of that testimony grown since that time?

17. How does 1 John 4 & 5 help you reflect on and understand your identity?

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