

English Transcript
How to Study the Bible
Lesson 6 - Study each Verse in Order with a Section

Welcome back to our GTN course called, How to Study the Bible. We have been following a simple seven step process for studying any book of the Bible. The process is much like the shape of an hourglass. An hourglass is broad at the top, it narrows in the middle and becomes broad again at the bottom.

In Steps 2, 3 and 4, our objective was to spend an extended amount of time in Observation. We wanted to get a high-level understanding of 1 John. You read through the book multiple times. I suggested reading it 6 to 10 times. After each reading, you closed your Bible and wrote down what you remembered, chapter by chapter. We next took these observations and wrote an introduction or overview of 1 John. In Step 4 we used all of this work to divide the book into major sections and chart the book. We assign short statements or sentences to each of the sections on our chart. All of these steps help to provide a broad overview of the book.

In Step 5, we will begin to narrow our study, like the middle of the hourglass. We will now return to chapter 1 of 1 John and begin to study verse-by-verse within each section. In this course, I will ask you to work through just 1 John 1:1 through 2:2 to get a feel for this process. You can then continue this process by repeating this process for each section of 1 John.

This step of the process will begin to move us toward understanding the meaning of each verse and the meaning of a section. You will want to understand the meaning of words in each verse and section. You will consider the context of each verse within a section. Another important consideration is whether there are other parallel passages in other books of the Bible to better understand the meaning of this verse.

A helpful resource at this step in the study process is Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. You can download this free app on your phone and in settings select "French" as your language of preference. This tool will enable you to look up the meaning of each word in a verse as well as see all the occurrences of that word in the Bible to better understand the meaning of the word in the verse you are studying.

ACTIVITY #4

Due to the limited time we have in this course, there will not be time to study each verse in order in all five chapters of 1 John. Typically, you might allow one month to study a short book like 1 John spending an hour a day working through this process. Turn to pages 32 and 33 in your workbook for Learning Activity #4. For this activity, you will only be asked to study verse-by-verse through 1:1 to 2:2.

The text for this section is included in your handout. I have included some other

passages in the righthand column that you may reference as you study each verse. Much like we made observations from Acts 1:8 in lesson one, you will now dig deeper by making observations one verse at a time as you begin to develop the meaning of each section of Scripture in 1 John.

You can refer to my notes for his activity on page 48 in the Appendix.

As you study each verse in the passage, you can mark up the page with your notes (underline, circle, box certain words). Show how certain words relate to other words/verses. Look up other parallel passages in Scripture. Use the Strong's Concordance App to look up any words you may not understand. Consider how the verses in this section fit into the overall context of the chapter and the overall theme of the book?

Once you complete the verse-by-verse study on page 32, you may summarize the section in your own words on page 33. There may be some new learnings from this activity that can be used to update your book chart.

Pause the audio recording now and begin your verse-by-verse study through 1 John 1:2-2:2 on page 32. Once you have completed your study of just that section, restart the audio for a brief summary. You may then continue this process through the rest of 1 John. I have provided my verse-by-verse notes for each section in 1 John as a document you can download from the website for this lesson. These notes are currently just available in English and French.

Welcome back! How did you do?

I hope you experienced the joy of slowing down and making observations verse-by-verse and allowing the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and illuminate the Word of God for you to understand spiritual truths.

Our high-level understanding of 1 John from the prior study steps provides us with the context needed for this deeper study. In this activity we were focused on just 1 John 1:1 – 2:2.

There are at least three, possibly four paragraph breaks in this section: 1:1-4, 1:5-10, and 2:1-2. The NIV breaks up 1:5-7 and 1:8-10 into separate paragraphs.

Before we dig into each verse, I noticed in these three sections that certain words and phrases are repeated. There are also a number of contrasts. It will be interesting to see how these words and concepts are used to reinforce the overall purpose statements in 1 John

- Light and darkness
- Truth and Lie
- Sin

- Walk, practice, abide
- Eternal life and life
- Proclaim, Testify, Witness
- Heard, Seen, Touched
- Manifest
- Fellowship
- If, then, but statements
- Blood
- Cleanse

As we begin to study verse by verse, we start with the first section 1:1-4. Here are some of my findings from my verse-by-verse study.

Chapter 1:1 begins with “that which was from the beginning”. Immediately we might think about Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1-4. This draws us to the truth that God is eternal, One God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three persons of the God head were present and involved with creation. John 1:1-4 reinforces that Jesus is God and that He is the Creator as well.

The apostle John next emphasizes that he, along with the apostles, were eyewitnesses. They heard, saw, and touched Jesus. The false teachers of that day were teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh. John testified in John 1:14 that the Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us. This first paragraph also testifies to the incarnation of Jesus. John and the others were also witness of the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus. John repeats this eyewitness testimony three times in the first four verses (1:1, 2 and 3).

John is providing a biblical view of Christ. This is part of the Doctrinal Test that is repeated throughout 1 John. We can know that we have eternal life, when we know the Jesus who we have put our trust in for salvation.

In 1:1, Jesus is the word of life. Jesus makes this claim that he is the Word (logos) and the Life (zoe). The concept of logos in the Greek world was that the logos gave order to the universe. The logos was the mediator between God and the world. This causes us to refer to John’s gospel once again. In John 1:1-4, we are told that in the beginning was the Word (the logos), and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word is the source of light and life. The Word, the Logos, also became flesh and revealed the character of God to the World.

The word John used for “life” is not “bios”, meaning biological life, but rather “zoe”. In the Greek, “zoe” implies spiritual life or something beyond just the physical realm. We also know from the Bible that Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus is also the source of eternal life in 1 John 1:2. In 1 John 5:20 we are told that Jesus is the true God and eternal life. Eternal life is not a place, or a thing, but rather a person. This was the purpose of the Gospel of John in John 20:31 that all might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name.

1 John 1:2 also states that the word of life, Jesus, was with the Father, and then manifested himself to us. This is what John wrote about in the gospel of John. Jesus left the glory of heaven to fulfill his mission from the Father.

These truths were so important for John that his only response was to testify and proclaim the truth. This is repeated in verses 2 and 3. We also have the responsibility to be bold witnesses of the truth of who Jesus is and what he did.

Finally, in verse 4 we see a reference to the fellowship that exists with God and other believers. The word for fellowship is “koinonia” which implies oneness, unity and partnership. We might also think of communion, intimacy, a shared life. This is all true when one has fellowship with God the Father and the Son, through the indwelling Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament this concept is expressed in the concept of the tabernacle. God dwelt among His people, he tabernacled with them. When the Word took on flesh, Jesus “tabernacled” with us. The manifest presence of God that was seen through the pillar of cloud and fire in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle was now present in human flesh.

John ends this introduction with his first purpose statement in verse 4. “And we write these things so that our joy may be complete or fulfilled.”

The next section includes a longer paragraph from 1:5-10. I see the apostle John providing a biblical view of sin in contrast to the biblical view of God and Christ.

In verse 5, we are told that God is light and in him there is no darkness. This conflict between light and darkness runs throughout the Bible. The truth that God is light means that he is pure, holy. Jesus said that he is the Light of the world, whoever follows him will never walk in darkness but have the light of life. To have a proper understanding and hatred of sin, we must know the truth of God’s character.

In verses 6-10 there are a series of three contrasts. Take note of the if/then/but statements.

1:6 If we say we fellowship with God but walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. The word for “walk” means a lifestyle. A professing Christian can’t claim to have fellowship with Christ and still live a habitual life of sin. Our old sin nature is one of darkness. The reason people do not turn to Christ is because we love darkness and evil instead of the light.

1:7 shows us the contrast to verse 6. “But, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanse us from all sin.” Once again, John comes back to the theme of fellowship or communion, intimacy, oneness with Christ. The person with true saving faith will begin to live a life of obedience, walking in the light, and will rely on the continual cleansing from sin that Jesus offers.

Verse 8 and 9 form another contrast related to the truth of our sin nature and the forgiveness that Jesus offers. If we deny our sin nature, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But for the true believer, if we confess our sin, Jesus grants forgiveness and continual cleansing from all unrighteousness. Here we learn more about the importance of confession. The word for “confession” means “to say the same thing”. We are agreeing with God regarding our sin. Confession is a characteristic of genuine faith in Christ. This humility of surrender takes place at the moment of salvation and throughout the life of a believer.

Verse 10 introduces the final contrast that is completed in 2:1-2. “If we say we have not sinned, we not only lie, but we make God to be a liar and his word is not in us.” There is no place in the Christian life for minimizing sin or saying that sin does not matter in my life. This is reinforced in Romans 3 and Romans 6.

This was the false teaching of the Gnostics in that day. They taught that the physical world was evil and filled with sin. This is why Jesus could never have been both deity and humanity. They taught that Jesus did not come in the flesh but was only a phantom. They also taught that you can live anyway you like because the flesh counts for nothing. Sinning in your mind and body has no impact on one’s true self which is purely spiritual. This was the heretical teaching of the day. The apostle John confronted this false teaching throughout this letter.

As the final paragraph begins in chapter 2, we see the contrast to 1:10 and the second purpose statement in 1 John. “My little children, I am writing these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

In the section from 1:5-10 we see that God is light, we are sinners by nature, yet through the blood of Jesus we can be forgiven and made righteous.

Chapter 2:1-2 begins a new section that introduces the Moral and Social tests of genuine fellowship or faith in Christ. We will be introduced to the biblical view of obedience in 2:3-6 and the biblical view of love in 2:7-17.

In 2:1-2 we receive more doctrinal truth of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished for us through the cross. Jesus is our Advocate. This word is also used of the Holy Spirit as the One who comes alongside, the paraclete or intercessor. Jesus represents us like a defense attorney before the Father. He testifies that we have been washed by his blood and declared righteous. This is true because Jesus is the Righteous One (2:1).

Jesus is also the source of propitiation for our sins. God’s wrath has been satisfied and washed away through Jesus’ death for our sin. We think of 2 Corinthians 5:21 where the apostle Paul writes, “God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to become sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” We are called not to sin, that is one of John’s purposes for writing this letter, but if and when we do sin, we can rest secure in our fellowship with God through Christ based on his atoning and propitiatory sacrifice for sin. This truth should not

cause us to sin more freely but to walk more in the light as he is in the light

In these first three paragraphs we learn many truths about Jesus's deity and humanity.

He is from the beginning – eternal God.

He manifested himself and took on flesh – the incarnation – God became man.

Jesus is the Word of Life.

Jesus is one with the Father.

Jesus is the Light of the world – no sin, pure, holy.

Jesus is our substitute and sacrifice – he took our place.

Jesus' blood cleanses us from sin.

Jesus is our Advocate before the Father.

Jesus is the Righteous One.

Jesus provides for our propitiation – His death satisfied the just wrath of God.

As I studied this section, 1:1-2:2, verse-by-verse, I made observations and began to move to interpretation, or what does the passage mean. I looked for structure within this section and began to compare what I observed with other supporting passages. I started writing a summary for each verse or a series of verses as I studied verse-by-verse.

I am sure you saw many of these truths in your study as well.

What else did you observe that I did not mention?

What were your summary statements for each of the verses?

This verse-by-verse study process can now be repeated for each major section of 1 John that you have outlined on your book chart. I encourage you to take the next week and study all the way through the end of Chapter 5. As you observe deeper truths, you may also adjust your book chart or add key points that the Holy Spirit reveals to you.

You may refer to my Step 5: Section by Section Study notes for 1 John that I have posted on the website with this lesson. Currently, these notes are only available in French and English. You may review my verse-by-verse notes for the following sections. I included a few summary thoughts for each section as well.

- 1 John 2:3-17

We can know we have fellowship with God through abiding in Christ.

Abiding is depending on Jesus for all we need to live for him and all we need to serve him.

- 1 John 2:18-3:24
We must challenge the counterfeit teachers and confirm the genuine.” John summarized the Christian life ... we are “born”, we then “belong”, and as a result we begin to “behave” more like a member of God’s family through the power of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately, we will “become” conformed to the likeness of Christ when we see him in glory.
- 1 John 4:1-21
This section reinforces the Doctrine Tests through two contrasting commands, confessions and groups of people. John then defines God’s character as love and calls us to live out the reality of God’s indwelling character in us through our own love and obedience. The mystics of John’s day focused all their efforts on loving God vertically. True love for God must be visible in the world (vertical and horizontal). This is at the heart of the first and second greatest commandments.
- 1 John 5:1-21
This is the final section of the book that provides a summary of the Doctrine, Love and Obedience Tests of genuine fellowship. The person who has been saved by grace through faith in Christ, passes the first test based on what we believe about Jesus. Obedience and love are the evidence of a redeemed life. Obedience and love do not save anyone or keep them saved. These are characteristics of the person who has been born again into the family of God.
The Spirit-controlled mind, knows and understands the truth.
The Spirit-controlled heart, feels and acts in love.
The Spirit-controlled will, desires to walk in obedience.

Completing Step 5 could be the end of your study before moving to Step 7 focused on application. You have completed a high-level overview of 1 John as well as a detailed verse-by verse study through each section on your book chart.

The next step will be to complete the hourglass model and go broad again to incorporate your learnings from Step 5 into your chart. This will then prepare you for the final step leading to application.

If we use the illustration of a physical body, the work you completed in Steps 2, 3 and 4 were like building the skeleton of the body. You now understand the “bones” of 1 John. You understand the outline of the book, the major themes, the context and purpose for why John wrote this letter. Step 5, studying each section verse-by-verse, provides the flesh and the internal organs that surround the skeleton.

In Lesson 7, I will introduce you to one more study tool, Step 6, that can be used for deeper study if you have the time to invest. This investment will be well worth your time. Remember, there is no time limit for your study of a book. The more time you invest the greater the rewards in spiritual growth, maturity and effectiveness.

In Lesson 7 we will introduce a learning activity to study specific topics with 1 John in greater detail. We call this step, classifying the results of your study. We are almost finished. Just Lessons 7 and 8 to go.