



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

How to Study the Bible

Student Handout

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Lesson 1: Why Study the Bible?

Introduction

“The great tragedy among Christians today is that too many of us are under the Word of God, but not in it for ourselves.”

- Howard Hendricks, *Living by The Book*

What about you? Do you regularly read and study the Bible on your own? Or are you like many who rarely if ever open the Bible and feed themselves on the Word of God?

(Data from 2021 for Bible reading frequency in the United States from Statista 2022.)

Never: 29%, 4 times a year or less: 29%, Once a month: 8%, 4 times a week: 14%, Daily: 11%

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, *“Give a **man** a **fish** and you feed **him** for a day. **Teach a man to fish** and you feed **him** for a lifetime.”*

Certainly, having someone fish for you is convenient, but in the long run, you become dependent on someone else. However, if you are taught to fish, you can fish for yourself at any time you desire or need to fish.

When it comes to the Bible, is it better to study the Bible for others or teach them how to study the Bible for themselves? We believe it is much better to teach someone how to study the Bible for themselves rather than to cause them to become totally dependent on the preacher or teacher.

Would you rather hear from God or hear from a preacher?

We believe people are hungry to hear from God. Too many preachers love to hear themselves talk while their people are starving and really need and desire to hear from God.

Let me ask you another question. What kind of sheep are you leading? Are they unhealthy, skinny sheep or are they healthy, well-fed sheep? It is rather simple to visit a church and see what kind of sheep are there. Well-fed sheep reflect a preacher who is consistently teaching the words God has spoken while skinny sheep reveal a pastor who rarely studies and regularly is working on their sermon late into the evening on Saturday nights.

Thankfully, God has spoken and has not remained silent. God wants to communicate with us! This is a staggering thought. The God of the universe, the creator of our souls, desires to communicate with each one of us! If you have a Bible, you have access to what God wants to say to you.

As you hold your Bible, you are literally holding the words, the insights and the knowledge God wishes to communicate to you.

Reasons to Study the Bible

Discuss these joys of reading and studying the Bible and understanding the Bible correctly.

- You hear the voice of your heavenly Father speaking to you in the Bible.
- You learn what God is really like from His own lips (and often God's true character turns out to be a surprise because we're so used to hearing about God from others who may not really know Him.)
- You discover the wonderful truth of salvation and how to be sure of heaven.
- You find out the things that are on God's heart – what really matters to Him about this world and His will for your life.
- The truth changes and transforms you.

Also discuss some of these harmful consequences of misunderstanding the Bible.

- There are some things in them (Paul's letters) that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. (2 Peter 3:16)
- I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. (Acts 20:29-31)

"Reading the Bible gives us breadth, studying gives us depth." -- Jerry Bridges

Reading and study have their place in Bible intake, and we need to periodically remind ourselves to slow down and go deep when reading the Bible. You don't need much formal training to become a student of the Bible. Like with any sport, there's no substitute for getting on the field and into the game. You can talk about it only for so long but the only way to really improve is to practice and play the game. Listening to gifted pastors and teachers is helpful for our spiritual growth. Using good reference tools are also important. But there is simply nothing better than studying the Bible for ourselves.

1. Bible Study is essential to **GROWTH!**

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.
(1 Peter 2:2)*

- Attitude
- Appetite
- Aim

2. Bible Study is essential to **SPIRITUAL MATURITY!**

¹¹ We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil
(Hebrews 5:11-14)

- Time
- Training

3. Bible Study is essential to **SPIRITUAL EFFECTIVENESS!**

*¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting** and **training** in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

What can we learn from Ezra?

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

How about the Bereans?

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

The Bible Is Our Authority

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, living Word of God and is our authority in all matters. Look at what Paul says to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Or how Peter says it in 2 Peter:

2 Peter 1:20-21

20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. **21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Because God's Word is both inspired or breathed out by God and superintended by God in the writing down of His words, we have this authoritative source of truth in all matters of faith and life. This is what we are privileged to study, obey and to teach.

In fact, Paul declares that we are mandated to preach and teach this word. Notice how Paul says this in 2 Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:1-2

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

The word "preach" means to herald or proclaim in public. (Oxford English Dictionary 2007)

Before there was ever a printed page, a newspaper, a radio, a television or email the king of the land would send a herald to towns and villages to literally shout out the words the king wished to communicate. If the king wanted to visit a town, he would send a herald ahead of his visit to announce his arrival. The herald would come into town and shout, "The king is coming, the king is coming!"

In the same way, the preacher is to communicate the words of the King. The preacher is to herald or proclaim, "The king is coming." We have this mandate to declare, to herald, to proclaim the Word of God.

Did you notice by what authority Paul gives us this mandate in 2 Timothy 4:1?

First, Paul says this in the presence of God. That alone is enough to get our attention but then he goes on to say in the presence of Jesus Christ as well! Paul is speaking to us today as if we were standing in the presence of God and Jesus Christ. That is powerful and reveals the importance of this mandate to preach and teach the Bible.

Paul does not just invoke the name of God and Jesus Christ but also reminds us that Jesus will judge both the living and the dead, that Jesus Christ is coming again, and that Jesus Christ will rule in His kingdom. That, my friend, is a powerful mandate!

A mandate witnessed by both God and Jesus Christ. A mandate given to us with this great accountability to Jesus Christ who will judge, who is coming again and who will rule with all authority. Until that great day, when Christ is reigning on earth, we are to study, obey and teach the authoritative Word of God. We are never to abandon the Word of God with its life- transforming authority.

When any preacher abandons the Bible and begins to share only their thoughts, they are abandoning their authority. God has given us His Word and our only response is to study it, obey it, preach it, and teach others how to fish for themselves.

Key Definitions

- Hermeneutics - the study of the methodological principles of interpretation of the Bible.
- Exegesis – an explanation or critical interpretation of a text, based upon what is present within the text itself.
- Eisegesis – an explanation or interpretation of a text, based upon what we bring to the text ourselves.

Goal and Purpose

Our goal in hermeneutics is to determine as accurately as possible the historical meaning of a text, the meaning that the text's author or final editor meant to communicate to his intended audience.

Ultimately, we want to discern God's message accurately, avoid or dispel misconceptions or erroneous perspectives and conclusions about the Bible, and be able to accurately apply the Bible's message to our lives. We accomplish this through this simple, three step study process.

Basic Steps for Studying the Bible

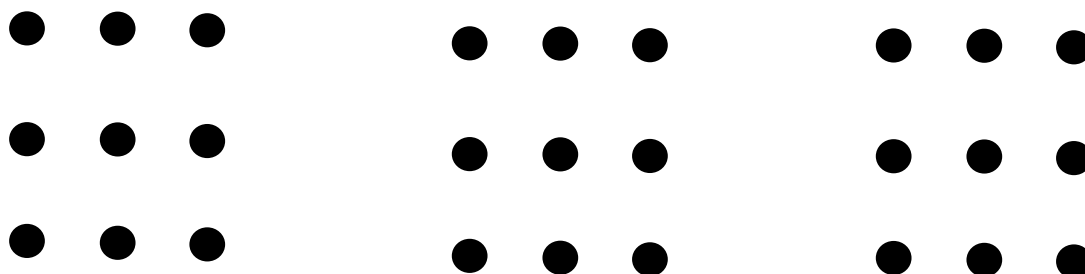
This material is a summary of Howard Hendricks' wonderful book, *Living by The Book*.

Observation: What do I see?

"Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from your Law" (Psalm 119:18).

What makes one person a better Bible student than another? He can see more, that's all. The same truth is available to each student in the text.

Without lifting your pen/pencil from the paper, draw four straight, connected lines that go through each dot only once. After you've tried two different ways, consider what restrictions you might be setting up for yourself in solving this problem. We need to look beyond the obvious, look outside of the box.



In this step you ask, "what are the facts?" You become a bible detective, looking for clues. Who is the author? When was it written? Where does the story take place? Who is the primary audience? Who are the characters? What are the places? What do you know about the culture? What are key terms to be defined? What is emphasized? What is repeated? What things are related? What things are alike? What things are different? What things are true to life? What is the structure/grammar of the sentences (subjects, verbs, objects, connecting words, comparisons, contracts, etc.)?

Activity: Let's Start with a Verse

1. Read Acts 1:8 and make as many observations as you can from this one verse on the next page.
2. What is the most important term in this verse? The word "But". This word indicates a change in direction. If forces you to go back and read what came before this verse, in context. Verse 1 talks about a former book to Theophilus. Who is the author? What is the other book?
3. Ask questions regarding who are the people in this verse and what do we know about them? What is the main verb in this verse? What is the tense of the verb? What are they going to receive? Look for cause-effect relationships. Define other terms. Define places that are mentioned. How does this verse relate to the entire Book of Acts?

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses
In Jerusalem,
and in all Judea
and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.

You should find that in less than 10 minutes it is easy to come up with at least 30 observations from just this one verse. Some have made more than 300 observations from this verse. We have not even studied a paragraph, a chapter, or an entire book.

Interpretation: What does it mean?

Every book in the Bible has a message, and that message can be understood. God intended the Bible as His revelation to all people. “All Scripture is profitable”. That means it has purpose, it has meaning. “Meaning” is not our subjective thoughts read into the text, but God’s objective truth read out of the text. The quality of your interpretation will always depend on the quality of your observation.

Interpretation is necessary because there are natural barriers to our understanding of the meaning of a biblical text. Some of these are related to language, culture, and literary styles. There are several tools in addition to the Bible that can help to remove these barriers with the help of the Holy Spirit. No matter how well you do with Interpretation, there will still be things you will not fully understand. Don’t get tied up in knots over the problems and unanswerable questions that may come up in your study of the Bible. The miracle is that you can understand all the essential things that God wants you to understand for your eternal salvation and for your daily living.

Ask questions of the text to look for meaning, find answers and then integrate your answers into a meaningful whole. Consider the following:

- Type of writing (i.e., prophesy, poetry, history, etc.)
- Content (much of this is uncovered during Observation)
- Context (what comes before and after the text, and how it fits into the book and the overall message of the Bible)
- Comparison (compare Scripture with Scripture using a tool like a Concordance)
- Culture (Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, a good study Bible can help with this)
- Consultation (consult other resources like commentaries, podcasts of sermons, etc.)

Work to summarize the main point for the passage in one sentence and then identify the sub-points in the passage that reinforce the main point.

Application: How does it work?

Application is the most neglected yet the most needed step in this process. Too much Bible Study begins and ends in the wrong place. It begins with Interpretation, and it also ends there. But we've learned that you don't start with the question, "What does this mean?" but rather, "What does this say?" You also don't end the process by asking, "What does this mean?" but rather, "How does this work?"

"Spiritual growth is a commitment to change. And yet, the human heart resists nothing as strongly as it resists change. We will do anything to avoid it." - Howard Hendricks

- KNOW: You want to know what the text means (interpretation) and know yourselves.
- RELATE: We must relate the truth of the Word of God to our own experience and areas of life.
- MEDITATE: We need to pay close attention to the Scriptures, even memorizing them so they will continue to work in our hearts and minds.
- PRACTICE: The practice of the truth should be our primary goal of Bible Study.

Here are 7 questions to ask yourself as you look to apply God's Word or put what you have studied into practice in your life (Matthew 18:19-20, James 1:22-25).

- Is there an EXAMPLE to follow?
- Is there a SIN to avoid/confess?
- Is there a PROMISE to claim?
- Is there a PRAYER to repeat?
- Is there a COMMAND to obey?
- Is there a CONDITION to meet?
- Is there a VERSE to memorize?

Bible Study Resources

- Bible Translations
 - Interlinear (the Greek and Hebrew text positioned in between the lines for comparison)
 - Formal equivalent (NASB, ESV, NKJ)
 - Mix of Formal Equivalent and Dynamic equivalent (NIV)
 - Dynamic equivalent (NLT)
 - Paraphrase (The Message)
- Concordances (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance can be downloaded as a free App.)
 - Helps in locating a passage if a key word or phrase can be remembered
 - Systematizes words and key phrases so can do a word, theme, or topical search of all the biblical uses of the term
 - Allows you to do word studies to determine meaning of key words in a particular passage
- Bible Dictionaries: Explain the origin, meaning, and use of key words and terms in the text. Helps to overcome the language barriers to understanding the Bible.
- Commentaries: The studies of a biblical scholar related to the text. Helps to overcome language, cultural and literary barriers to understanding the Bible.
- Bible Atlases: collection of maps showing places mentioned in the text and perhaps some description of their history and significance. Helps to overcome geographical barriers to understanding the Bible.

10 Simple Tools to Help Along the Way

- The Author's Purpose
- Context
- Structure
- Linking Words
- Vocabulary
- Repetition
- Quotations and Allusions
- Genre
- Examples to Follow?
- Who Am I?

The Cost of Bible Study

- Effort: The greater the investment of time and effort, the greater the reward.
- Openness to God: Proverbs 8:34-35.
- Openness to Change: The Bible was written not to be studied but to change our lives (Rom 8:29).
- Diligence: What matters is not how far you get, but that you keep making progress.

Lesson 2: 10 Tools to Help with Studying the Bible

This lesson incorporates a summary of what is presented in more detail in a wonderful book, *Dig Deeper: Tools for Understanding God's Word* by Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach.

1. The Author's Purpose Tool

It sounds obvious, but the Bible authors wrote their books with a particular purpose in mind. They were not just writing random thoughts that came into their minds. These purpose statements are often included in their writing.

For example, read John 20:30-31 and summarize what John's purpose was for writing his gospel.

In this course we will study the book of 1 John. This book contains several “tests” by which you can determine whether your faith is genuine. John includes four purpose statements for writing this book. Look up the references and write them in the box below. Summarize the purpose statements in your own words.

1 John 1:4

1 John 2:1

1 John 2:26-27

1 John 5:13

Here are some questions to discover the author's purpose for a book if a clear statement is lacking:

- Who is writing and to whom?
- What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
- Are we made aware of any problems that need to be resolved or addressed?
- Are there any repeated themes or a single idea that holds everything together?

Look at 2 Timothy as an example of a book that lacks a clear purpose statement.

Paul is writing to Timothy, with whom he has a close relationship (1:1-7). Paul is an apostle, a commissioned spokesperson for Christ (1:1, 11). As a result of his gospel preaching, he has suffered greatly (1:11-12; 3:10-11). He is in prison (1:8) and has been deserted by many (1:15; 4:14-16). He thinks he is about to die (4:6-8).

Timothy is a church leader (1:6; 2:2, 14). There are false teachers in his church who are distorting the true gospel (2:14-18, 22-26; 3:1-10, 13). Worse still, some in the church are eager to hear these false ideas (4:3-4).

Paul spends most of his time encouraging Timothy to stand for the true gospel (1:8, 13-14), to teach it himself and train others to teach it also (2:2, 15; 3:14-17). He warns Timothy of the false teachers and instructs him how to deal with them (2:14-26; 3:1-10). He tells Timothy throughout that he must endure suffering (1:8; 2:3-13; 3:10-12). He continually reminds Timothy of the future – both the reward of heaven (1:1, 10; 2:10; 4:8) and the sobering reality of judgment (2:12-13; 4:1).

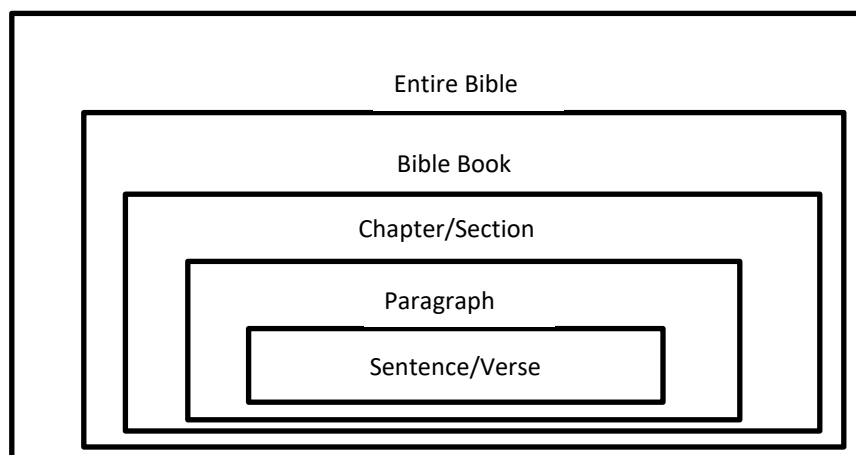
Putting it all together, our detective work suggests that Paul's purpose in writing to Timothy ***is to urge him to continue to stand for the true gospel despite the suffering that it will bring, in light of the glorious future that awaits him.***

"Timothy, stick with the gospel. The same old gospel. Keep teaching it, even though people on your church don't always want to hear it, even though it's going to mean suffering and hardship. This is the gospel, Timothy – God has saved us! Not because of what we have done, but because of his grace! Jesus has defeated death, Timothy! Life and immortality are ahead of us. Isn't it fantastic! Isn't it worth suffering for?"

2. The Context Tool

What is the difference between the way you read a novel compared with reading an encyclopedia?

There are different levels of context from a sentence (verse) to a paragraph, within a chapter, book and then the entire Bible.



Example 1: Exodus 20:3 says, "You shall have no other gods before me." This is the first of the Ten Commandments. If we read this and the nine others that follow it on their own, we might conclude that you become one of God's people by being good enough by keeping all the rules. But if we read one verse earlier: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3). God gives the commandments to His people that He has already saved from Egypt. God is saying this is how you are to live now that I have saved you.

Example 2: If you read 2 Samuel 13-18 you might have great sorrow for David and his family (David's son Amnon rapes his half-sister, Tamar. David's son Absalom murders his half-brother Amnon. King David weeps. Absalom attempts to overthrow his father as king. David flees for his life. David's army defeat the rebellion of Absalom and he dies in battle. As you read all of this you might have great sympathy for David and his family. To understand the context of these chapters, you must look at 2 Samuel 11-12. We see that all the tragedy in these chapters is the result of David's sin.

2 Samuel tells us that sin does matter. There are real consequences for sin. It destroys relationships. It is not worth any immediate gratification.

In our 1 John study, it will be important to understand the context of the false teachers and the heresies they were spreading at the time when John was writing this letter. This will make it more clear why John includes what he does in this letter.

3. The Structure Tool

A good place to start your study is to subdivide a passage of Scripture into smaller sections. We want to keep the big picture in mind, otherwise we just end up with a bunch of isolated verses or passages. The key to looking at the parts without losing sight of the whole is to pay attention to the structure of the passage by asking two questions:

- How has the author broken down his material into sections?
- How do these sections fit together?

We can use the Structure tool to divide up an entire book of the Bible into a few major sections or divide a small section into smaller units. You might want to limit your sections to 3-6. If you get much bigger than that it becomes too complex. There is no full proof way to divide these sections. By reading and re-reading the book or passage, you will begin to see the way the author has organized his thoughts. It is helpful to give each section a title with a summary statement explaining the section.

Example of a Book Structure: Isaiah chapters 1-39, 40-55, 56-66

Example of a smaller section divided into smaller units: Isaiah 40:1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-11

With Structure we also should pay attention to the grammar in the text. What is the subject, the verb, the object in a sentence? What are the tenses of the verbs? Consider the body of thought in a paragraph which is composed of various sentences. God communicates His ideas in sentences with paragraphs. Another tool, Linking Words, is also part of the Structure. What are the cause and effects, comparisons, and contrasts in the text? How are various thoughts emphasized through repetition or other grammatical tools?

In our 1 John study, you will notice at least three major themes in the letter and a series of cycles where these themes are repeated throughout the letter.

4. Linking Words Tool

Words like “if”, “since”, “consequently”, “for this reason”, “therefore”, “because”, “so that”, are all examples of linking words. These words help us make sense of the flow of an argument in a passage and reveal cause and effect relationships between different statements. Someone once said, “If you see a ‘therefore’, always ask what it’s there for.”

Therefore – links what comes before the word and is the reason for whatever comes next (usually the result or consequence that flows from it).

For – links in the opposite direction. The result or desire outcome comes before the “for” and what follows is the reason or context for that result.

Words like *therefore*:

consequently
for this reason
thus

Words like *for*:

because
since
so

The key point with linking words is to make note of the logical connections in a passage.

Other linking words to look for:

“If/then” highlights conditional statements.

“So that” identifies a purpose statement.

“But” always signals that a contrast or comparison is being made.

You will see several linking words in our study of 1 John (if/then, so that, but, this is how we know ..., etc.). These are words will be helpful in your search to understand the true meaning of any Bible passage.

5. Vocabulary Tool

The Bible is filled with words with very specific meanings as well as common, everyday meaning.

Examples of technical terms in the Bible: Redemption, Atonement, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Sanctification, Justification, etc. Bible dictionaries are helpful to gain a deeper understanding of these more technical terms. You can also look in a concordance to see how a specific word is used in other places throughout the bible to better understand it’s meaning in the passage you are studying.

There are also examples of familiar words that can take on different meanings depending on the context. For example, in his letter to Titus, Paul speaks of the “hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2). The common use of the word hope means something we would like to happen, though we have no certainty that it will happen. Paul means something different. Eternal life is promised by God. Since God does not lie, there is no doubt about this hope. It is certain.

The main point for our study of any passage or book of the Bible is the importance of defining the words in the passage using a concordance or Bible dictionary to best understand the use of the word in that passage.

6. Repetition Tool

One of the ways that a Bible author can get our attention or make sure we don't miss something important is to say it more than once. We should look for words and/or phrases that are repeated in a passage or throughout a book.

Read Isaiah 53:4-6 and make note of a few words or a theme that is repeated throughout these three verses.

⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

What do you see?

What is the primary message that Isaiah may be communicating in this passage about Jesus?

As you study 1 John, you will see several words, phrases and themes that are repeated. Plan to make a list of these as you develop your outline of the book.

7. Quotations and Allusions Tool

Sometimes a Bible author will quote or allude to another verse in the Bible to reinforce the point they are making. It is always a good idea to look up the original context of a quotation.

Here's an example: Read Luke 4:16-21. Your Bible may note that Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus first is stating in this example that Isaiah's prophecy points to Himself as the promised Messiah. The second thing to notice is that Jesus ends the quote from Isaiah 61 in the middle of the verse 2. Jesus cuts out the reference to "the day of vengeance if our God". Jesus seems to be saying that "this is the day of God's favor, but it is not yet the day of judgment!" Judgment will come but there is still time to repent and believe forgiveness before the day comes.

Allusions are more difficult to spot because we may not know the Old Testament well enough to identify these allusions. A cross-reference Bible will help to identify these allusions. The better we know the Old and New Testament, the better we will be at identifying these connections that the author is making for us.

In our study of 1 John, there are no Old Testament quotations. John refers to his Gospel as well as a few other New Testament references and allusions. As you study 1 John, look and listen for these references to develop a deeper understanding of a specific passage and the entire book.

8. The Genre Tool

There are various forms of writing within the Bible called *genre*.

Here are some of the major *genres* in the Bible (from *Living by the Book*, Howard Hendricks):

- **Exposition:** Carefully reasoned arguments or explanations; well organized; logical flow; terms are crucial; builds to a logical, compelling climax, the aim is agreement and action.
- **Narrative and Biography:** A broad category in which story is prominent; includes historical accounts; structure is conveyed through plot; characters undergo psychological and spiritual development; selected events used to convey meaning; events positioned for contrast and comparison.
- **Parable:** Brief oral story illustrating moral; truth frequently lies on stock characters and stereotypes; presents scenes and activities common to everyday life; encourages reflection and self-evaluation.
- **Poetry:** Verse intended to be spoken or sung rather than read; emphasis on cadence and sounds of words; vivid images and symbols; appeals to emotions; may employ features of praise, pastoral and other literary styles; in the OT, heavy use of parallelism.
- **Proverb:** Short, pithy statements of moral truth; reduces life to black-and-white categories; often addressed to youth; frequently employs parallelism; points readers toward the right and away from the evil; heavy use of metaphors and similes.
- **Wisdom Literature:** A broad category in which an older, seasoned person relates wisdom to a younger; may use parables; gives observations on fundamental area of life – birth, death, work, money, power, time, the earth, etc.; appeals to the basis of human experience.
- **Prophecy:** Authoritative presentation of God’s will and words; frequently intended as corrective; intended to motivate change through warnings; foretells God’s plan in response to human choices.
- **Apocalyptic:** Dramatic, symbolic material vivid imagery; stark contrasts; events take place in the first-person as an eyewitness account; portrays a cosmic struggle between good and evil.

Much like with the different sections of a newspaper/magazine (i.e., Editorial, News, Sports, The Arts, Personal Testimonies, etc.) there are different literary forms in the Bible. Once we know the literary style we are reading, we can choose the correct approach for interpreting the meaning of what we are reading/studying.

How would you classify the genre for our study in 1 John?

Two helpful rules to consider:

1. When something is presented as historical fact, pause to consider that it really happened.
2. When something is presented as imagery/metaphor, don’t base crazy predictions of the future on its being literally or physically true.

9. Example to Follow? Tool

Sometimes we are to follow the example of people we read about in the Bible. Here are three events in the Bible followed by a possible interpretation that could be correct or incorrect.

1. In Daniel 6, an order is given that prayer may not be offered to anyone but the king of Babylon. Daniel ignores the king's edict and continues to pray to the true God. This means that we should follow Daniel and obey God rather than men.
2. In 1 Samuel 3 the young boy Samuel hears his name called during the night and thinks it is Eli calling him. Eli tells him it is God speaking to him, which leads to God giving Samuel a prophecy. This means we should expect God to speak to us audibly and tell us what will happen in the future.
3. In 2 Samuel 11 King David commits adultery with Bathsheba. This means we to can commit adultery.

Do you see the problem with this approach of assuming that every example is a good example to follow?

The point is we need to be very careful with this “follow my example” approach. Not everything done by a Bible character is good. And even the good things are not always normative; that is, they may not be always true for all Christians at all times.

Some events in the Bible are descriptive and others are prescriptive. Descriptive events simply describe what is happening in the story without any statement regarding whether this is approved by and/or honoring to God. Something that is prescriptive means that it can be applied to our lives in specific situations and it might even be normative for all people at all times.

One test is whether the example in question aligns with or contradicts what is said in the Bible in other books.

10. Who Am I? Tool

Often when we read about stories in the Bible, we tend to identify ourselves with the main character. More often the “heroes” in the Bible are intended to be pictures of Jesus, and so we should learn from them about Him, rather than about ourselves. Sometimes the characters we should identify with aren't the heroes so much as the “villains”. For instance, we might be one of the grumbling Israelites whom Moses has to lead, rather than Moses himself (see 1 Cor 10:1-13).

However, sometimes these characters are role models (both positive and negative) for us. We just need to stop and think before we rush to put ourselves into the picture.

Lesson 3: How to Study a Book of the Bible

Now it is time to learn how to study the Word of God on your own. You begin by gaining an overview of the book or passage you are going to study. For this study we are going to talk about studying an entire book of the Bible. There are 66 books of the Bible and the principles we share can be used for all 66 books of the Bible. By learning how to study one book of the Bible you will learn how to study all 66 books of the Bible!

Before teaching, preaching or even studying the details of any book of the Bible, it is critical for the Bible student to gain an overview of the entire book. The temptation for most is to read what someone else has to say about the Book we are going to study. However, we are suggesting that you avoid what others have learned and investigate the Bible for yourself. *Do you want to fish for yourself, or do you want someone to fish for you?*

All you will need is your Bible, a pencil or pen, paper and some time.

There are a number of methods for studying the Bible. There are topical and word studies, biographical character studies, studies of the types of Christ, chronological studies, etc.

The method of study that is the most thorough, most difficult, and the one that yields the greatest and most permanent results is the study of the Bible, one at a time. We will highlight the primary steps in this process and then you will have an opportunity to apply this process to our study of 1 John.

1. Select a Book to Study

For your first few studies, select shorter books and easy book to understand. Select a book that is rich in teaching to illustrate the advantages of the method we will share. **This is why we have selected 1 John**, since it is not a difficult book to read, yet it is one of the “richest” books in the Bible. You will be challenged by the content of teaching of this short book of the Bible.

2. Master the Book’s General Content

The method for doing this is very simple. It consists of reading the book through without stopping, and then reading it again, and then again. Read the book at least 6-10 times in one sitting. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you are about to read. Then read the entire book from beginning to end at one time. You will not remember everything, but you will begin to pick up some key thoughts. As you are reading you will be tempted to stop and investigate new words and key thoughts that you see. Resist this urge and push through to read the entire book in one sitting.

For example, if you were to choose Ephesians, you would sit down and read all 6 chapters at one time. This sounds like a lot at first, but it only takes 20-30 minutes to read the entire 6 chapters of Ephesians out loud and in one sitting.

After reading it though once, write down what you recall. You may not remember a lot the first time through the book you choose and that is fine. Because we are going to read it again, a second time. Like the first time, read it through from beginning to end without stopping and then write down what you recall. Then repeat this same process a third and fourth time. We are going to do this 6-10 times. You are only limited by the amount of time you have to invest in your study of the Word of God.

You will be amazed at the understanding you will gain simply by praying and then reading and re-reading a book of the Bible multiple times. There is no magic formula for the number of times you read your book of the Bible. However, the more times you read your book, the better your understanding will be. Plan to read your book at least 6-10 times before you begin to study it in detail. This overview will aid you tremendously in your study.

After reading through your book 6-10 times and writing down what you recall, what you have written will be better than anything you read in a commentary. Why? Because you will have fished for yourself and discovered the main ideas of the book for yourself.

The Bible is basically 66 letters from God to us. In each letter God communicates some main thoughts for through the human authors who were led by the Holy Spirit to write each letter/book.

As limited, finite human beings, we are grateful that God has revealed to us His authoritative Word in the 66 books of the Bible. Our lifelong assignment is to discover the intent or purpose of all 66 books of the Bible. This begins with your personal study of one book at a time. By reading it through from beginning to end 6-10 times, then recording what you recall.

The beauty of this kind of study is that there are no books to purchase, no seminars to attend, no Internet is needed, and no money is spent. You just need a Bible, a pen, paper, and time.

Next, we will learn how to synthesize or collect all we have learned from our reading into one chart.

ACTIVITY #1

1. Turn to 1 John for the book we will all study in this course.
2. Pray and ask God for insight into your reading.
3. Read through 1 John in one sitting. (15 minutes, 5 chapters and only 105 verses)
4. After reading your book in one sitting, write down what you remember on pages 27-28 of this workbook
5. Repeat this process 3 more times.
6. If we had more time in this course, you would read 1 John a total of 6-10 times in one sitting. You will be amazed at what you recall and understand after 10 readings.

3. Prepare an Introduction/Overview of the Book

The following questions have been provided in your workbook.

Who wrote the Book? To whom did he write it? Where did he write it? When did he write it? What was the occasion of his writing? What was his purpose in writing this book? What were the circumstances of the author when he wrote? What was going on in the culture at the time of his writing? How does the book provide a look into the life of the author? What are the main ideas or themes of the book? What is the central truth of the book? What are the characteristics of the book?

With these questions in your mind, read back through the book and as you come up with an answer to one of the questions, write it down. When you have completed this process, you may consult a commentary to supplement your study. A short overview of 1 John is provided in this handout to help to facilitate this step. You will also have time to compare your notes with others in the class.

ACTIVITY #2

Go to page 29-30 for instructions to complete this activity.

4. Divide the Book into Sections and Create a Book Chart

Go through the book and mark the major divisions of thought throughout the book. Don't limit yourself to the chapter and section headings that may be added to your Bible. These are often good section titles, but they are not inspired Scripture. You should look for natural grouping of ideas/thoughts that have been expressed in the words of Scripture. Then go back and identify any sub-divisions within a major section. On the chart you can use short phrases. The final step is to give each section and sub-section a concise but clear summary statement. An example of this is provided on pages 22-23 for Paul's letter to the Ephesians. These statements can also be helpful if you'd like to develop a sermon series or Bible study based on a book that you have studied.

Sample: Sections and Chart of Ephesians

1:1-2 Greeting Grace and Peace! 1:3-14 Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ through the working of the: - Father - Son - Holy Spirit 1:15-23 Prayer to Know God Better: - Hope of calling - Riches we possess - Power of the resurrection - Under the Authority of Christ	2:1-10 God’s grace to dead men. - Dead in sin - Saved by grace through faith - Saved unto Good Works to glorify God 2:11-18 Chosen by God. - Separated - Unified in Christ - Peace in the Body 2:19-22 Citizens of heaven. - Members of God’s family - Foundation of the church - A holy, living temple	3:1-6 Ministry to the Gentiles. 3:7-13 God desires to use each of us to make the gospel known. 3:14-19 Prayer for spiritual transformation. 3:20-21 All Glory to God!	4:1-6 Walk Worthy! A life pleasing to God. 4:7-13 God’s grace gifts to us all. Purpose: Grow toward maturity! 4:14-16 Healthy bodies. 4:17-19 Walk not like the Gentiles. 4:20-24 New Clothes 4:25-32 Put off and Put on!	5:1-7 Walk in love 5:8-14 Walk in the light 5:18-20 Walk in Wisdom 5:21-24 True Submission 5:25-33 Love your wife	6:1-3 Children 6:4 Parents 6:5-8 Employees 6:9 Bosses 6:10-18 The Invisible War! The Full Armor of God! 6:19-20 Bold Ambassadors 6:21-24 Closing, Overflowing life of faith of grace and peace!
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Position of the Christian			Practice of the Christian		
Beliefs			Behaviors		
Blessing and Privileges of the Christian			Responsibilities of the Christian		
Written from Prison in Rome (60-61 AD)					

Summary statements for each section of Ephesians

Ephesians 1

- 1:1-2 God wants all believers to enjoy grace and peace.
- 1:3-14 Praise God that He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 1:15-23 God, open the eyes of my heart so that I may know You better.

Ephesians 2

- 2:1-10 God's grace has been extended to dead men and women like us.
- 2:11-18 Don't forget you have been chosen by and united in Christ.
- 2:19-22 Does my home reflect my citizenship?

Ephesians 3

- 3:1-6 Paul reveals that Gentiles are a part of God's family.
- 3:7-13 God's plan is to use all of us to make the Gospel known.
- 3:14-19 What should be growing in our hearts?
- 3:20-21 Praise our God of the impossible who can accomplish the impossible.

Ephesians 4

- 4:1-6 Walk worthy of the calling we have received!
- 4:7-13 What grace has God given to you? Spiritual Gifts Series?
- 4:14-16 How healthy is our body? What will we be when we grow up?
- 4:17-19 I used to walk that way but not anymore.
- 4:20-24 What am I going to wear today?
- 4:25-32 Spiritual Transformation is a process of Putting off and Putting on.

Ephesians 5

- 5:1-7 Walk in love as an imitator of God
- 5:8-14 Turn on the Lights: A life with no secrets!
- 5:15-20 Wisdom says to redeem every moment!
- 5:21-24 We are all to submit...even wives.
- 5:25-33 How to love your wife.

Ephesians 6

- 6:1-3 Instructions for children.
- 6:4 Instructions for parents.
- 6:5-8 Instructions for employees.
- 6:9 Instructions for bosses.
- 6:10-18 The Invisible War: Stand Strong in Him!
- 6:19-20 God has called us to be verbal, bold ambassadors for Him.
- 6:21-24 Living a life of faith overflowing with grace and peace; review the entire book

ACTIVITY #3

Turn to page 31 of your workbook and use the chart to create your section and subsection divisions for your study of 1 John. At the end of the course, you will have an opportunity to make any final changes/edits to your book chart after completing the study process (page 40). I have included my personal chart for 1 John in the Appendix. Don't allow my work to influence how the Holy Spirit will guide you in this process. There is no one right way to chart a book. The key is that the final chart is an accurate summary of the book, and it is helpful for you to teach, preach and communicate the key meanings and relevant applications from 1 John.

5. Study each Verse in Order

- How do we understand the exact meaning of the verse?
 - Understand the meaning of each word in each verse.
 - Carefully study the context.
 - Examine any parallel passages in other books of the Bible.
- Analyze the verse: What does each verse teach?
 - Don't include anything that is not clearly in the verse.
 - Find all that is in the verse.
 - State what you find as accurately and exactly as possible.

A helpful resource 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 best 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. 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 page 32 in your workbook and work through 1 John chapter 1 making observations of the chapter and studying the key words and meaning of each verse. Record your finding on page 33.

6. Classify Your Results

This step in the study of a book is to classify the results obtained by the verse-by-verse study. You have discovered and recorded a great number of facts. The work now is to put these in some sense of order.

Make a complete list of all the topics you have observed in the book. Make a separate sheet/card/column for each topic and record each point in your analysis on the appropriate sheet/card/column.

In our study of 1 John, there are many of the topics that might come out of your verse-by-verse study.

ACTIVITY #5

On pages 34-37 a list of topics from 1 John are listed for further study to classify the results of your verse-by-verse study. Due to the limited time in this course, we have selected just two major topics for you to classify. You will find that this step will help to bring clarity to your overall study of 1 John.

7. Meditate Upon and Digest the Results

This final step is to simply to meditate upon, and digest, the results of your study. The results of your study are to be used: first for personal growth and enjoyment, and second to be shared with others through teaching, preaching, encouragement, etc.

Take time to review your outline and slowly ponder your learnings, point by point, until these wonderful truths sink into your soul, and live in you, and become part of your life.

This entire process can be modified based on the time you have to invest. For example. Some may skip the verse-by-verse study and may just look up key words in verses and then classify topical findings for the entire book.

Simply reading the book 6-10 times, recording what you can remember, and then creating the section divisions and charting the book, will provide a depth of understanding. In this process you will look to utilize the Observation, Interpretation and Application principles as well as some/all of the tools provides in this course as appropriate for the book being studied.

This is the step in the process to think about how you will **apply what you have learned** from your study of 1 John.

- KNOW: You want to know what the text means (interpretation) and know yourself.
- RELATE: You must relate the truth of the Word of God to your own experience and areas of life.
- MEDITATE: You need to pay close attention to the Scriptures, even memorizing them so they will continue to work in your heart and mind.
- PRACTICE: The practice of the truth should be our primary goal of Bible Study.

Here are 7 questions to ask yourself as you look to apply God's Word or put what you have studied into practice in your life (Matthew 18:19-20, James 1:22-25).

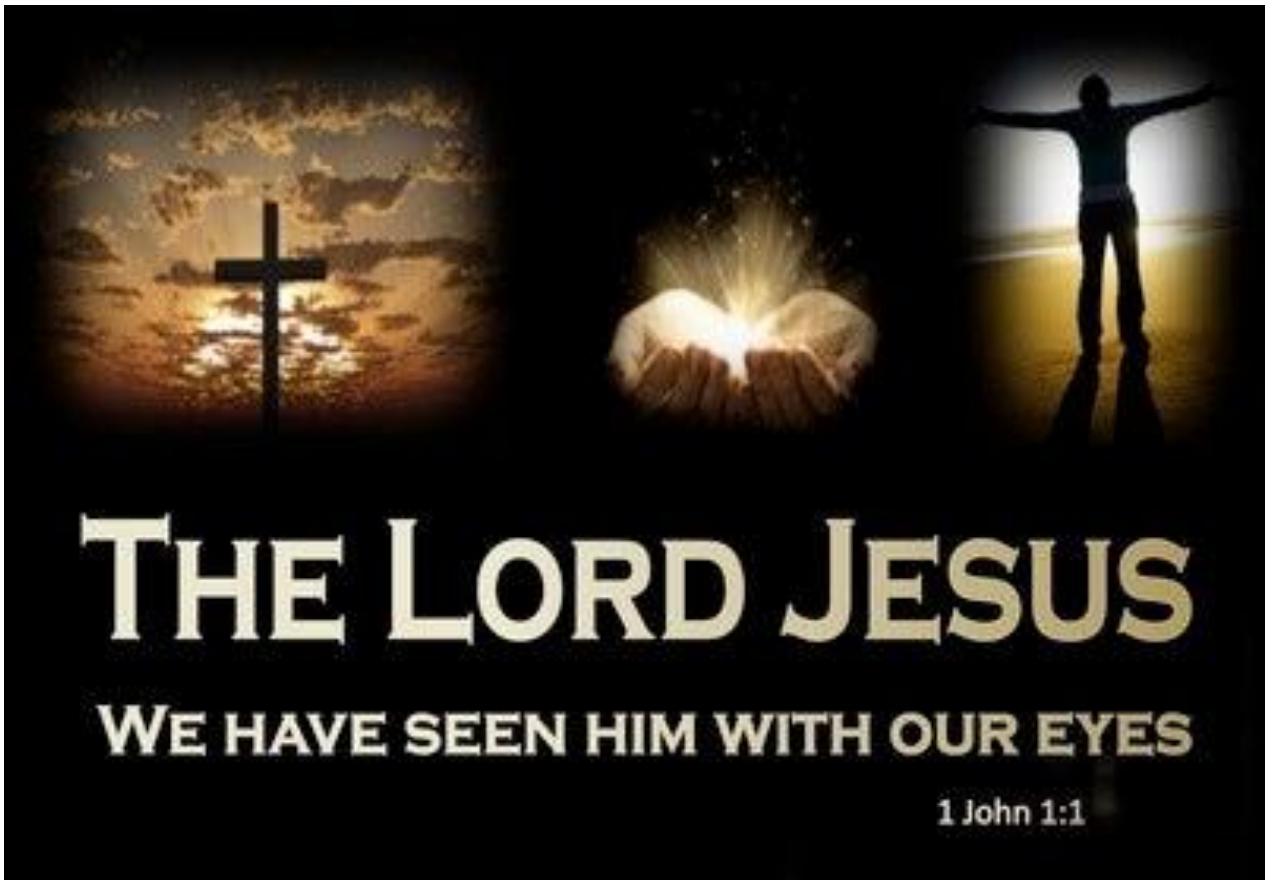
Is there an EXAMPLE to follow?
Is there a PROMISE to claim?
Is there a COMMAND to obey?
Is there a VERSE to memorize?

Is there a SIN to avoid/confess?
Is there a PRAYER to repeat?
Is there a CONDITION to meet?

ACTIVITY #6

Record your application thoughts on pages 38-39 of your workbook.

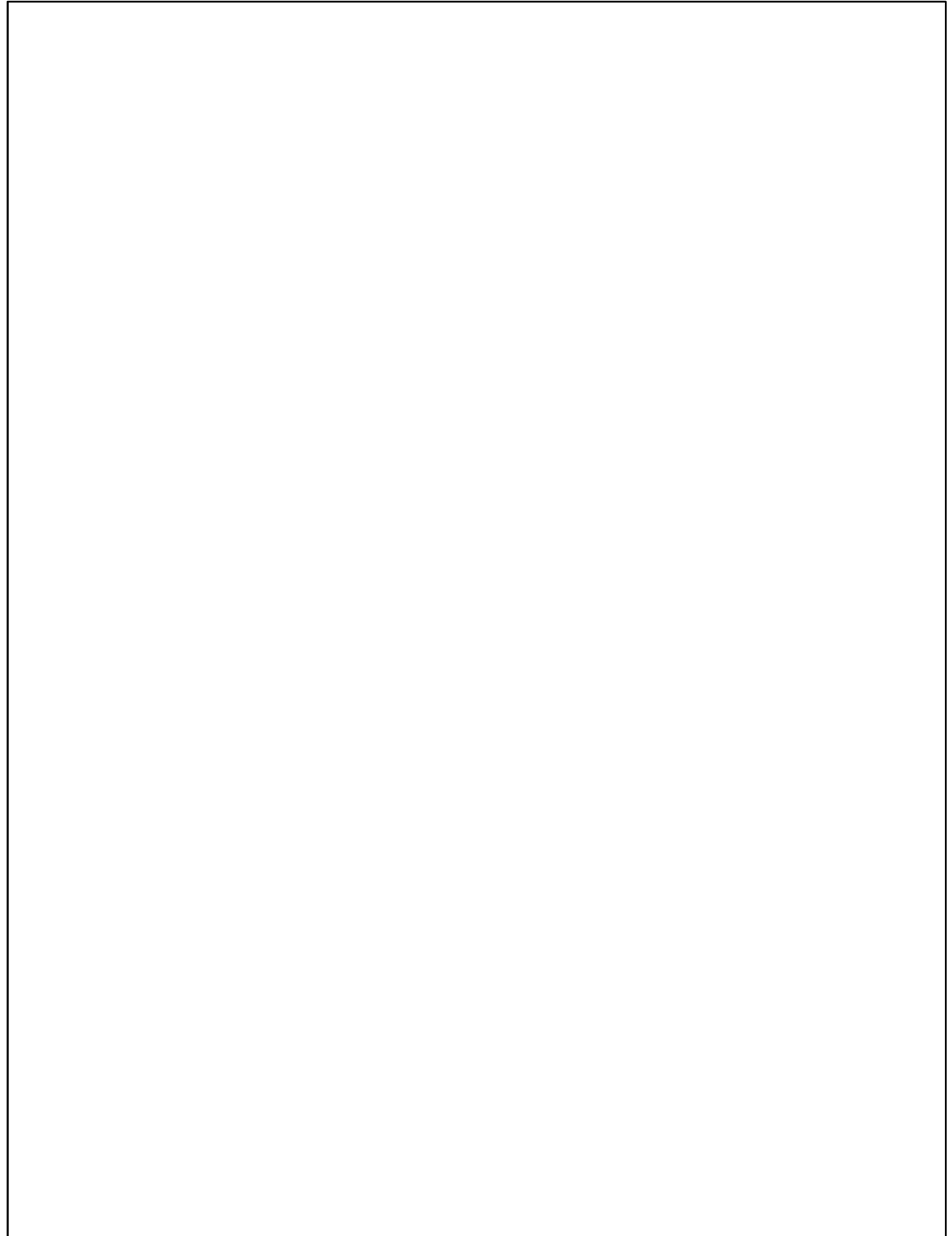
Your Personal Study Workbook: 1 John



Activity #1: Master the General Content of the Book.

Read 1 John at least 4 times in one sitting. After each reading, use the next two pages to record what you remember in each chapter.

1 John observations/learnings ...



Activity #2: Prepare an Introduction/Overview of the Book

Questions to consider: Who wrote the Book? To whom did he write it? Where did he write it? When did he write it? What was the occasion of his writing? What was his purpose in writing this book? What were the circumstances of the author when he wrote? What was going on in the culture at the time of his writing? How does the book provide a look into the life of the author? What are the main ideas or themes of the book? What is the central truth of the book? What are the characteristics of the book?

Since we have limited time in this class and limited access to other supporting resources, some background information on 1 John has been provided below from *Talk Thru the Bible* to help you develop your personal introduction/Overview for this book based on the culture and other events surrounding the time when this book may have been written. Use the next page to write your brief introduction/overview of 1 John based on your initial readings and observations.

The external evidence for the authorship of 1 John shows that from the beginning it was universally received without dispute as authoritative. All of the Greek and Latin church fathers accepted this epistle as written by the apostle John. There is much internal evidence that points to John as the author as well. The style and vocabulary are similar to the Gospel of John with the limited Greek vocabulary and frequent contrast of opposites. John may have left Jerusalem before its destruction in 70 AD and he ministered near Ephesus. The believers in these congregations were well established in Christian truth and John wrote to them not as novices but as brethren grounded in apostolic doctrine (2:7, 18-27; 3:11).

This letter shows a personal touch that reveals his close relationship to the original recipients. John was advanced in years, and he wrote this fatherly letter out of loving concern for his “children” whose steadfastness in the truth was being threatened by the lure of worldliness and the guile of false teachers.

The Gnostic heresy at that time taught that matter was inherently evil, and a divine being therefore could not take on human flesh. Another variation of this false teaching was Docetism, the doctrine that Christ only seemed to have a human body. The result in both cases was the same – a denial of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Gnostics also believed that their understanding of the hidden knowledge (gnosis) made them a kind of spiritual elite, who were above the normal distinctions of right and wrong. This led in most cases to sinful conduct and complete disregard for Christian ethics.

The major theme of 1 John is fellowship with God. John wanted his readers to have assurance of the indwelling God through their abiding relationship in Him (2:28; 5:13). Belief in Christ should be manifested in the practice of righteousness and love for the brethren which in turn produces joy and confidence before God. John wrote this letter to encourage this kind of fellowship and to emphasize the importance of holding fast to Christian doctrine. 1 John was also written to refute the destructive teachings of the Gnostics by stressing the reality of the Incarnation and the emptiness of profession of faith in Christ without practical obedience. These “antichrists” failed the three tests of righteous living, love for the brothers and sisters, and belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Incarnate God-man.

Write Your Personal Introduction/Overview of 1 John

Activity #3: Create Section Divisions and Chart of 1 John (1st Draft)

	Chapter 5
	Chapter 4
	Chapter 3
	Chapter 2
	Chapter 1

Activity #4: Study Each Verse in Order (study 1 John 1:1-2:2)

¹ That which was from the beginning,

which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,

this we proclaim concerning the word of life—

² the life was made manifest,

and we have seen it,
and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life,

which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

³ that which we have seen and heard

we proclaim also to you,

so that you too may have fellowship with us;
and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,

that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say 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 we have not sinned,
we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Cross-References

John 1:1-2

John 1:14
2 Peter 1:16

John 1:1-4

Col 1:9
“our” can also
be “your”,
John 3:29

2 Cor 6:14
John 3:19-21

Heb 9:14,
Rev 1:5

Prov 20:9,
James 3:2

Psalms 32:5,
Psalms 51:2

Rom 8:34,
Heb 7:25

Rom 3:25

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.

The final step is to write a summary statement for each verse including the main points being made by the verse as well as it's connection to the section of Scripture you have studied.

Verse-by-Verse summary of 1 John 1:1 – 2:2

Activity #5: Classify your verse-by-verse results

List of major topics for further study from 1 John based on your verse-by-verse study. Listed below are some of the major topics in this book.

From the Beginning, Life, Proclaim/Testify, Eternal Life, God, Father, Son of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Appeared/Manifested, Fellowship, Light vs Darkness, Claim, Walk, Truth vs Lie/Falsehood, Purify, Forgive, Right/Righteous vs Sin, Atonement, the World, what we can Know, Obey/Obedience, Love vs Hate, Overcome, Antichrist(s)/False Teachers, Deny, Lead astray, Anointing, Remain/Continue, Belong, Born of God, Dear Children, Hope, Devil, Water/Blood

We will explore what 1 John says about the doctrine of “Jesus Christ/Son of God” and “What we can Know”. Use the space on the next two pages to record your results based on your verse-by-verse study.

A. Jesus Christ/Son of God

- 1:1 from the beginning
- 1:2 he appeared (Incarnation), with the Father, he appeared to us (incarnation & resurrection)
- 1:3 we can have fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ
- 1:5 John shared the message with them that God is Light (Jesus is the Light of the world)

Continue with your classification... There are more than 35 references in 1 John.

A. Jesus Christ/Son of God continued ...

B. What 1 John says “we can know”:

- 2:3 We can come to know him if we keep his commands.
- 2:6 We are in him. Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.
- 2:13 him who is from the beginning.
- 2:14 know the Father, know him who is from the beginning.
- 2:18 This is the last hour, antichrists/false teachers will depart from the fellowship.
- 2:20 you have an anointing from the Holy Spirit, you know the truth.
- 2:29 he is the righteous one, everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

Continue with your classification... There are at least 15 more references in chapters 3-5.

Based on these two classifications, write out a brief summary of what you have learned about the doctrine of ***Jesus Christ, the Son of God*** and ***what we can know/be assured of*** and how these learnings relate to the overall theme(s) of 1 John.

Summary statement related to Jesus Christ/Son of God ...

Summary statement related to “what we can know to be true” ...

Activity #6: Meditate and Reflect on your Study and Application of these Truths

Application thoughts for www.GotQuestions.org summary of 1 John

The Book of 1 John is a book of love and joy. It explains the fellowship we have with others and with Jesus Christ. It differentiates between happiness, which is temporary and fleeting, and true joy, which 1 John tells us how to achieve. If we take the words written by John and we apply them to our daily lives, the true love, commitment, fellowship, and joy we long for will be ours.

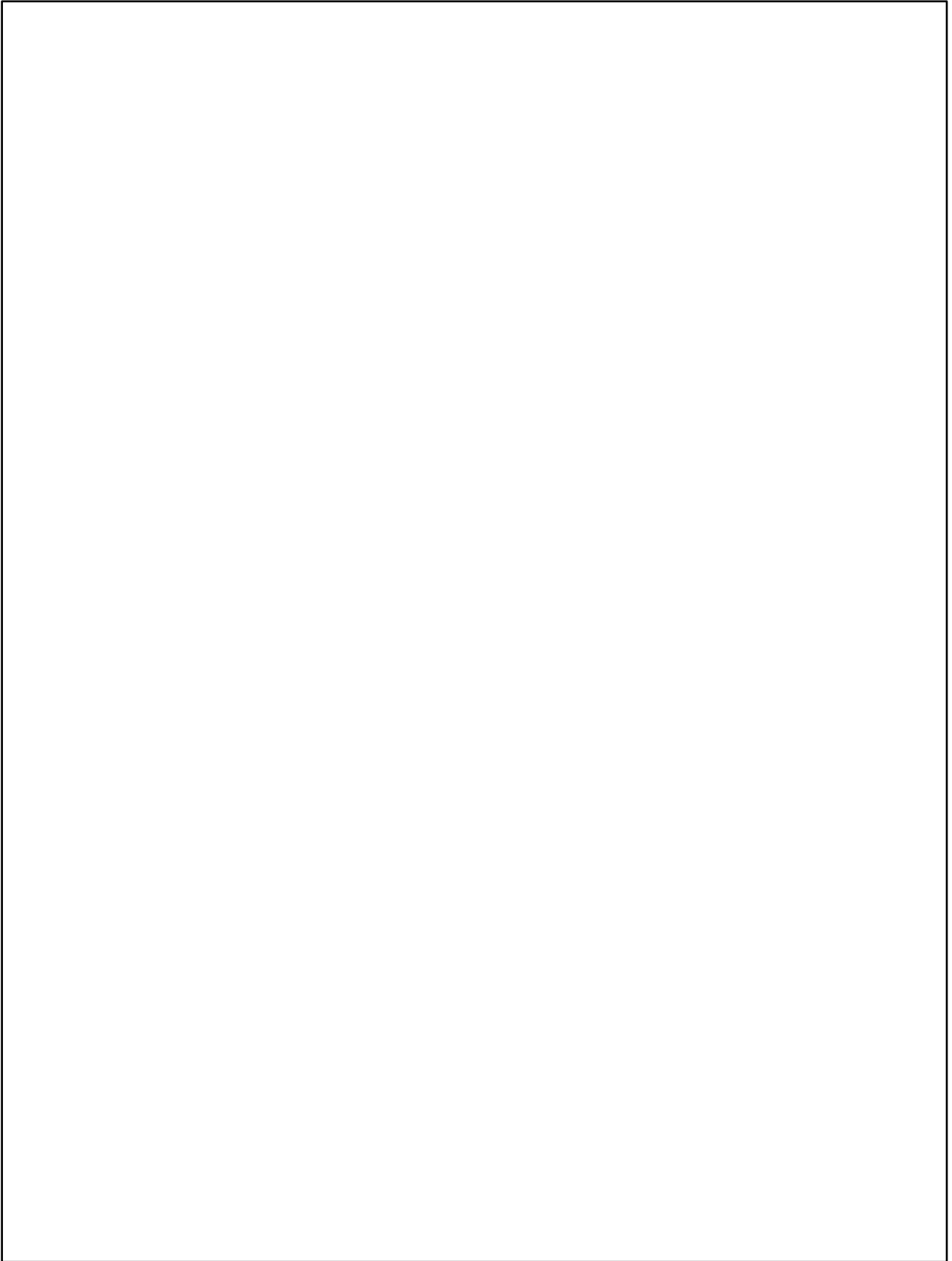
The apostle John knew Christ well. He is telling us that we can all have that close, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We have the witness of men who had direct and personal contact with Him. The Gospel writers present their solidly based testimony on a historical reality. Now, how does that apply to our lives? It explains to us that Jesus came here as the Son of God to create a union with us based on His grace, mercy, love, and acceptance. So many times people think Jesus is off in some faraway place and that He doesn't really concern Himself with our daily struggles, issues, and concerns. But John is telling us that Jesus is right here with us in both the simple, mundane parts of our lives and in the complex, soul-wrenching parts as well. John testifies as a witness of his personal experiences that God became flesh and lived among men. That means Christ came here to live with us and He still lives with us. As He walked the earth alongside John, so does He walk through each and every day with us. We need to apply this truth to our lives and live as if Jesus were standing right next to us every second of the day. If we put this truth into practice, Christ will add holiness to our lives, making us more and more like Him.

Now it's your turn. Meditate, pray and ask God to show you how to put your learnings from 1 John into practice in your life, your marriage and family, your church, etc.

Consider these application questions:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Is there an EXAMPLE to follow? | Is there a SIN to avoid/confess? |
| Is there a PROMISE to claim? | Is there a PRAYER to repeat? |
| Is there a COMMAND to obey? | Is there a CONDITION to meet? |
| Is there a VERSE to memorize? | |

Write down your personal applications from your study of 1 John (continue on the next page)



Activity #7: Final version of your Book Chart

	Chapter 5
	Chapter 4
	Chapter 3
	Chapter 2
	Chapter 1

Appendix

I. What I remember from reading 1 John

Chapter 1:1-4 (just 2 sentences in Greek)

Paragraph: 1:1-4

- Message “from the beginning”; Gen 1 and John 1
- Author was eyewitness, he saw, heard and touched Jesus (mentioned two times)
- Jesus is the Word of Life (Logos vs Zoe)
- They proclaimed the truth of eternal life (key verb)
- Truth about who Jesus is
- Jesus was with the Father and appeared in the flesh
- Emphasis on fellowship
- Fellowship (Koinonia) with other believers and fellowship with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ
- Result is joy for all believers (1st purpose statement in 1:4, “We are writing these things ...”)

Chapter 1:5-10

Paragraphs: 1:5-7, 8-10

- Message from the beginning
- Heard from him and proclaim to you (he was a witness)
- God is Light = no darkness at all, pure, holy
- Repetition of saying/claiming one thing but acting in different way
- If we claim fellowship with God but walk in darkness we lie and don’t have fellowship with him
- But if we walk in the light as Jesus is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and Jesus’ blood purifies us from all sin
- If we claim we are without sin, the truth is not in us
- If we confess our sins, we are continually forgiven and cleansed
- If we claim we are without sin, we say Jesus is a liar

Chapter 2:1-2

Paragraph: 2:1-2

- “My little children”
- Written so that you don’t sin (2nd purpose statement in 2:1. “I am writing these things ...”)
- But if you do sin, we have and advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, Atoning Sacrifice for our sin and of the whole world (John 3:16, John 4)

Chapter 2:3-6

Paragraph: 2:3-6

- Theme of Obedience
- We can know that we know him if we keep his commands
- If we say we know him but disobey him, we don’t really know him
- But, if we obey his Word, love for God is in you
- If you say you know God, you must walk/live like Jesus (obedience)

Chapter 2:7-14

Paragraphs 2:7-11, 12-14

- “Dear friends”
- Theme of love vs hate
- Old command that was from the beginning
- New command you have heard and seen in Jesus (John 13:34-35)
- If you claim to be in the light but hate your brother, you are still in the darkness (2 times); darkness

- Background:
- Author: Apostle John, old man
- Date: 90-95 AD
- Tone: pastoral, intimate, encouraging
- Culture: persecution, false teaching and heresies about Jesus
- Repetition of themes: Truth/Doctrine, Obedience (walk in the light), Love, Fellowship/Abiding
- Many contrasts throughout the letter

has blinded you

- Anyone who loves, lives/abides in the light
- “Children” – your sins are forgiven in Jesus’ name, and you know the Father
- “Fathers” – you know the Father (2 times)
- “Young men” – overcome the evil one (2 times), you are strong

Chapter 2:15-17

Paragraph: 2:15-17

- If you love the world, you don’t have love for the Father
- Sin: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and pride of life come from the world
- Those who obey (do the Father’s will) live forever

Chapter 2:18-27

Paragraphs: 2:18-20, 21-23, 24-25, 26-27

- “Dear children”
- Last hour
- Theme of Doctrine/Truth vs error (second time)
- Antichrist is coming, many antichrists have already come
- We know: they depart from the fellowship of believers, they deny Jesus is the Christ, deny the Father and the Son
- Those who acknowledge the Son also acknowledge the Father (Purpose Statement #3 in 2:26-27, “I write these things ...”)
- Believers have an anointing from God (Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 3)
- Remain/Abide, you possess eternal life (John 15)
- They deceive the faithful but your anointing from the Holy Spirit will keep you in the truth

Chapter 2:28-3:3

Paragraphs: 2:28-29, 3:1-3

- Remain/continue/abide in him, when he appears we will not be ashamed at his coming (again)
- Focus on Sonship
- You know he is righteous, you know everyone who does what is right is born of God (John 3)
- What great love from the Father – we are his children
- We are his children now!
- We don’t fully know what we will become, but we will be like him when he appears
- This hope purifies us in him (like he is pure)

Chapter 3:4-10

Paragraphs: 3:4-6, 7-10

- Sin = Law Breaker
- You know ... Christ appeared to take away our sin
- Christ is sinless
- Return to theme of obedience (second time)
- If you are in Christ, you will not continue a life of sin
- If you do continue to sin, you are not in him
- Don’t be led astray, live rightly in him
- If you live an evil life, you are of the devil
- Jesus appeared to destroy the devil’s work
- No one born of God continues in sin
- If you do right = of Christ; If you do evil = of the devil

Chapter 3:11-24

Paragraphs: 3:11-18, 19-24

- Message from the beginning ... Love one another (Lev 19)
- Return to focus on love (second time)
- Not like Cain vs Abel (murder, evil, unrighteous)
- If world hates you, you know him, passed from death to life
- If you hate, you are not in Christ
- This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us ... We should lay down our lives
- Love must be active, not just words and speech but action and truth
- We know we belong to the truth ... if our hearts don't condemn us (Romans 8:1)
- 3:23-24 is summary ... We keep his commands ...
 - Believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ
 - Love others
 - Obey (keep his commands and remain in him – John 15)
 - We know we are in him by the Spirit he gave us (John 14-16)

Chapter 4:1-3

Paragraphs: 4:1-6

- “Dear friends”
- Return to focus on Doctrine/Truth (third time)
- False teachers/spirits
- From God? Acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh (incarnation)
- Antichrist is coming and antichrists have already come

Chapter 4:4-6

- You have overcome them
- Holy Spirit in you is greater than the world
- They are from the world and the world listens to their teaching
- We are from God and those who are from God will listen to our teaching
- We know the Spirit of Truth vs the spirit of falsehood

Chapter 4:7-21

Paragraphs: 4:7-12, 13-16, 17-21

- Return to focus on love and obedience (third time)
- Love comes from God, God is love!
- Examples of God's love: He sent his Son, so we could live through him, he loves us first, he is the atoning sacrifice for sin
- We should love/live the same way
- We know him through his Spirit
- Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (John 3:16, John 4)
- If you acknowledge Jesus is the Son, you live in God and God in you
- God is Love (4:16)
- We have confidence to face the judgment, no fear, love others

Chapter 5:1-5

Paragraphs: 5:1-3, 4-5

- Victory in Christ
- Fourth time coming back to Doctrine/Truth, Love and Obedience
- Believe Jesus is the Christ = you are born of God
- Love the Father = love his children also
- Obey his commands (not a burden)
- Born of God = overcome the world (through faith) ... only for those who believe Jesus is the Son of

God

Chapter 5:6-12

Paragraphs: 5:6-8, 9-12

- God's testimony about Christ
- Water, blood and Spirit
- God's testimony is greater than the human testimony
- If you believe in the Son of God, you accept this testimony, reject the testimony – no life
- This is the testimony (5:11-12)

Chapter 5:13-21

Paragraph: 5:13, 14-17, 18-21

- Assurances/Certainties through Christ
- Know you have eternal life (5:13) (Purpose Statement #4, 5:13, "I write these things ...")
- Answered prayer (5:14-17)
- Victory over sin and Satan (5:18-21)
- Born of God = don't continue with life of sin
- Kept safe in Christ
- We are children of God, the world is under control of Satan
- We know Son of God has come (incarnation/resurrection), we know we have understanding, we know him who is the true God and Eternal Life
- Last statement: Keep yourself from idols (don't be led astray ... continue/remain/abide in Christ)

II. Pastor Mike's Introduction/Overview of 1 John

This short letter written by the apostle John was intended to encourage the church in his day to find great joy in the fellowship they had with each other and the Father and His Son. False spiritual teachers were a big problem in the early church (as in our day). Many churches fell prey to pretenders who taught their own ideas and advanced themselves as leaders. John wrote this letter to set the record straight on some important issues, particularly concerning the identity of Jesus Christ.

John included four purpose statements throughout this letter:

- Their joy in shared fellowship with Christ and each other would be overflowing (1:4).
- That they would not desire to sin but be secure in their relationship with Christ when they do sin because Jesus is our Advocate before the Father (2:1-2).
- That they would be on guard for the false teachers of their day (2:26).
- That they would know with confidence that they possess eternal life in Christ (5:13).

Because John's letter was about the basics of faith in Christ, it helped his readers reflect honestly on their faith. It helped them answer the question, Are we true believers? John told them that they could tell by looking at their actions. John repeated three themes through this letter that serve as a test for Genuine Fellowship among believers with the Father and His Son. These deal with ...

- 1) the Theological/Doctrinal Test about Jesus Christ,
- 2) the Moral Test related to sin and the obedient life of the Christian, and
- 3) the Social Test related to love for one another.

John cycles through these tests of Genuine Fellowship four times in these five chapters (105 verses) demonstrating how our belief in Jesus, our view toward sin and obedience, and the way we love are interconnected in the life of a true believer.

This letter is not meant to place a heavy burden on Christians or create doubt in their minds, but rather encourage them and remind them of all that they can know to be true of their new life in Christ, to stand strong in the face of false teaching, and to boldly proclaim these truths to a world that needs to hear these truths and receive salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, alone!

III. Pastor Mike's Chart of 1 John

1:1-2:17 Cycle #1 of Genuine Fellowship Doctrine /Truth Test 1:1-2:2 A. Biblical view of Christ (1:1-4) B. Biblical view of sin (1:5-2:2)	Moral/Social Test (2:3-17) A. Biblical view of Obedience (2:3-6) B. Biblical view of love (2:7-17) - Love that God requires (2:7-14) - Love that God hates/rejects (2:15-17) 2:18-3:24 Cycle #2 of Genuine Fellowship A. Part 2 of Doctrine/Truth Test (2:18-27) - Antichrists depart from the fellowship (2:18-21) - Antichrists deny the Faith (2:22-25) - Antichrists attempt to deceive believers (2:26-27) B. Part 2 of Moral/Social Test (2:28-3:24) - Purify hope of the return of Jesus (2:28-3:3)	Part 2 of Moral/Social Test continued ... Sin and the Believer (3:4-24) - <u>Righteous Walk</u> - Requirement of living a righteous life (3:4-10) - <u>Love Walk</u> - Requirement of love for others (3:11-24)	4:1-21 Cycle #3 of Genuine Fellowship A. Part 3 of Doctrine/Truth Test (4:1-6) - Demonic source of false doctrine (4:1-3) - The need for sound doctrine (4:4-6) B. Part 3 of Moral/Social Test (4:7-21) - The Character of the love of God (4:7-10) - What God requires of love (4:11-21) - <u>Love and Obedience</u>	5:1-21 Cycle #4 of Genuine Fellowship A. We are victorious in Christ (5:1-5) - <u>Truth</u>: Believe Jesus is the Christ - <u>Love</u> God and others - <u>Obe</u>y God - We overcome by Faith B. The witness of God for Christ (5:6-12) <u>TRUTH</u> - Water, blood and Spirit - Believe Jesus as Son of God C. Certainties/ Assurance of being in Christ (5:13-21) - Eternal Life (5:13) - Answered Prayer (5:14-17) - Victory over sin and Satan (5:18-21)
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5

IV. Verse-by-verse study (1 John 1:1-2:2)

1 That which was from the beginning,

which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,

this we proclaim concerning the word of life—

² the life was made manifest,

and we have seen it,
and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life,

which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

³ that which we have seen and heard

we proclaim also to you,

so that you too may have fellowship with us;
and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,

that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin.

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

⁹ (But) 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 we have not sinned,
we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

² My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Propitiation: God's wrath has been fully washed away through Jesus' death for our sin!

Eternal God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Apostles were eyewitnesses of the Incarnation
and Resurrection of Jesus (stated 3 times)

Jesus, the Life (John 14:6)
Manifest = appeared (Incarnation)

We have responsibility to be a bold witness;
(repeated 3 times)

Jesus is Eternal Life (5:20); Jesus left the glory of
heaven to fulfill his mission from the Father!

Goal: Fellowship
Purpose #1: Joy

Conflict between Light and Darkness.
We can't claim fellowship with Christ
and still live in habitual life of sin

John 8 – Those who follow Jesus will
never walk in darkness

False teaching to deny our sin nature

Response: turn to Jesus in humility to
be justified at salvation and
continually

No place for minimizing sin
or saying that sin does not
matter in my life – Look at
Romans 6 (no license to sin
under grace.)

Purpose statement #2: Don't sin (clear!)

When we do sin,
our relationship
is secure through
God's grace in
Christ

V. Classify results from verse-by-verse study (we selected two topics from 1 John)

1. Jesus Christ/Son of God (Doctrinal truths from 1 John)

- 1:1 from the beginning (eternal)
1:2 He appeared (Incarnation), was with the Father, appeared to us (Apostles)
1:3 We can have fellowship with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ
1:5 Jesus shared this message that God is Light (He also is the Light of the World)
1:7 He is the light, His blood purifies us from all sin (if we follow Jesus we will never walk in darkness)
2:1 He is our Advocate before the Father (represents us), the Righteous One (we are secure in Christ)
2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (propitiation – wash away all sin not just over sin)
2:6 Jesus provides the example for us to follow in obedience
2:22 Jesus is denied by the antichrists as the Christ
2:23 Deny the Son you also deny the Father, acknowledge the Son you also acknowledge the Father
2:24 Remain/Abide in the Son = you possess eternal life
2:28 Jesus will appear/come again
2:29 If we are righteous, we are born of him
3:2 Jesus will appear again, we will be like him, we will see him as he is (glorified)
3:3 Jesus is pure, and He is making us pure
3:4 Jesus appeared to take away our sins; Jesus is sinless
3:8 Jesus appeared to destroy the work of the devil
3:9 God's Seed (Gen 3:15) remains in the true believer
3:16 Jesus laid down his life for us (our substitute)
3:23 We are to believe in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ
4:2 Jesus came in the flesh (The Incarnation)
4:9 Jesus was sent by the Father into the world that we might live through him
4:10 God sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins
4:14 The Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the World
4:15 If we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in us and us in God
4:17 In this world we are being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-30)
5:1 If we believe that Jesus is the Christ = we are born of God
5:5 In Christ we overcome the world = the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God
5:6 Jesus came by water (baptism) and blood (crucifixion), Spirit testifies about Jesus as well
5:9 God testifies about his Son (God can't lie – Titus 1:2)
5:10 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God believes God's testimony
5:11 Life is in the Son, Have the Son you have life, don't have the Son then you don't have life
5:13 If you believe in the name of the Son of God you know you have eternal life
5:18 Jesus keeps us safe and the evil one can't harm us
5:20 The Son of God has come and given us understanding (of spiritual things), We can know him, he is the true God and Eternal life (Eternal Life is not a thing or a place but the person of Jesus Christ)

2. What we “*can know to be true*” from 1 John

- 2:3 We have come to know him if we keep his commands
- 2:6 We are in him! Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did
- 2:13 Know him who is from the beginning
- 2:14 Know the Father, Know him who is from the beginning
- 2:18 This is the last hour, antichrists/false teachers depart from the fellowship
- 2:20 Believers have an anointing to understand spiritual truths that comes for the Holy Spirit, you can know the truth
- 2:29 He is righteous, everyone who does what is right has been born of him
- 3:2 When Christ appears again, we shall be like him (transformed), we shall see him as he is (glorified)
- 3:5 Jesus appeared to take away our sin, Jesus is sinless, no one in him continues to live a life of sin, no one who continues a life of sin has seen him or knows him
- 3:10 Who the children of God are: anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, not anyone who does not love his brother (love and obedience working together as evidence of true faith)
- 3:14 That we have passed from death to life because we love one another
- 3:16 What love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we should follow his example
- 3:19 That we belong to the Truth, and we set our hearts at rest in his presence – no condemnation in Christ
- 3:24 We know these truths by the Spirit he gave us
- 4:6 We can recognize the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of falsehood by who listens to the false teachers and who listens to believers teach the Word of God
- 4:13 We live in him and he in us; he has given us his Spirit; we know the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world
- 4:16 We can rely on the love God has for us
- 5:2-3 That we love the children of God by loving God and obeying his commands
- 5:11 The testimony of God as to have has the Son and life and who does not
- 5:13 That we have eternal life
- 5:15 If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us, and we know we have what we have asked of him
- 5:18 Anyone born of God does not continue a life of sin, the One born of God keeps us safe and the evil one cannot harm us
- 5:19 We are children of God and the whole world is under the control of the evil one
- 5:20 Son of God has come and given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ; Jesus is the True God and eternal life

VI. Pastor Mike's Applications from 1 John

- Increased boldness in my witness for Christ based on the doctrinal truths of Jesus and the things I know to be true about our need for salvation and the victory we can have in Christ!
- In John 15:7-8 Jesus said, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." – John 15:7-8

God expects us to bear fruit to His glory. Our first concern should be His will, on earth as it is in heaven. And one way you and I bring glory to Him is by bearing fruit. By bearing fruit, I mean reproducing after our own kind, producing other Christians. As a result of our lives and witness, people should be coming to Christ. That is the fruitfulness that glorifies God. I need to beware of a life that appears pleasing to the eye of men but displeasing to God.

- When Jesus called us to follow him, he invited us into this fellowship with him, the Father and all believers. To live in fellowship with Christ means to move through the day in obedience to Him—seeking His will and not my own, loving Him and not the things of this world, spending time with Him in prayer, and reading His Word. It means to seek first the kingdom of God.
- Look to encourage other believers and remind them of these truths and invite them to walk and grow in closer fellowship with the Father, Jesus and each other.
- Confront false teaching in our day with more boldness, directness.
- Grow in my love toward those within the church as well as those who may not know Jesus yet, especially my neighbors. I need to become more intentional in my own "Jerusalem" with Tony and Susie, Mark and Sue, Bruce and Debbie, Dan and Sue, Greg and Susan.

VII. Starting a Monthly Plan to Study the Bible

It is wise to establish a plan for reading the Bible on a daily basis. It is not difficult to read through the entire Bible each year if you read just a few chapters a day. You might also concentrate on the study of one book each month for the next year. You can create your own schedule for completing the studies of these books. Here is a sample plan to get started with a variety of books from the Old and New Testaments. At the end of one year, you would have a deeper understanding of 12 books of the Bible. Within 10 years you might discipline yourself to study through all 66 books of the Bible.

January: 1 John

February: 2 John and 3 John

March: 1 Samuel

April: 2 Samuel

May: Ephesians

June: Philippians

July: Joshua

August: Ruth

September: 1 Peter

October: 2 Peter

November: Luke

December: Acts

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