



1 John
Community Group Study
Summer 2010



Week One

Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

Welcome to our of 1 John! The process we will use is called Inductive Bible Study, a study method that is easily learned and will enable you to study any part of Scripture on your own. It is an excellent tool you can use for the rest of your life as you strive to know the Lord through His Word.

There are three parts to Inductive Bible study: **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.** In the *Observation* stage we observe what the passage says. Observation answers the Who, What, Where, Why, When, and How of the text. It also lays a proper foundation for a correct understanding of the text. In the *Interpretation* stage, we uncover the meaning of the passage. It is important to note that correct interpretation (“What does it mean?”) cannot be accomplished without thorough observation (“What does it say?”). Finally, after the meaning of the text is uncovered, *Application* can be made.

Inductive Bible study requires careful attention and comprehension in order for Scripture to speak to you each week. Commit to working carefully through each step of the process every week. Remember that truth is not relative depending on circumstances or how a person feels and that Scripture always changes the person, not vice versa.

Begin with Prayer

Take time before you get into this study to call upon the name of the Lord. If there is unconfessed sin in your heart, confess and repent of it knowing that He is faithful and just to forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Ask Him to give you, by His Spirit, understanding of His Word in such a way that it will transform and renew your mind and conform you more into the image of His Son (Romans 12:2, 8:29). Ask the Lord to illuminate and open your eyes so that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Psalm 119:18). Ask God to empower you to be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only (James 1:22-25). Finally, reflect on what A.W. Tozer says in *The Pursuit of God*:

Sound Bible exposition is an imperative must in the Church of the Living God. Without it, no church can be a New Testament church in any strict meaning of that term. But exposition may be carried on in such a way as to leave the hearers devoid of any true spiritual nourishment whatever. For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself; and unless and until the hearers find God in personal experience they are not the better for having heard the Truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.

Study Tools

The key to your success in Inductive Bible study will be to remember that the process of studying Scripture always moves from observation to interpretation to application. When the background and context are known and all the details have been observed from a verse or passage, the author's meaning can be determined with confidence. There is one interpretation for a verse or passage, but you may discover many different applications even within your Community Group alone. Most importantly, the work and illumination of the Holy Spirit is essential to understand the fullness of God's Word. Jesus said in John 16:13 that it is the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth; and the truth sets us free. Keep in mind that the Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to transform your life.

Keys to Good Observation:

As you read, read:

1. Repeatedly: Read I John in its entirety each week.
2. Thoughtfully: Think about every detail that you're reading. Put yourself fully into the Word!
3. Patiently: Wait for God to reveal His truth to you. Don't stop until He does.
4. Selectively: Look for the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.
5. Prayerfully: Ask God to show you what He wants to show you from this text.
6. Reflectively: Move it from your head to your heart.
7. Purposefully: It's not just for head knowledge. It's to be more like Christ.

Look for the following as you read:

1. Background and context
2. Unfamiliar or difficult terms that you need to define using any of the following:
 - a) a concordance, such as Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
 - b) a Bible dictionary, such as New Bible Dictionary 3rd ed.
 - c) a Word Study dictionary, such as Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words
 - d) a dictionary, such as Webster's
3. People involved
4. Emphasized words, such as indeed, only, verily, truly, I tell you, behold
5. Repeated words
6. Related words
7. Purpose words, such as for, so that, in order that, because, and therefore
8. Cause/Effect

Keys to Correct Interpretation:

Content – This is what you have done in "Observation." What you observed will provide the content for what you interpret.

Context -

- a. Literary context – Where does it sit in the text of Scripture, including the paragraph, section, book, and in the Bible as a whole. What is said before and after?
- b. Historical context – What is taking place in history at this time?
- c. Cultural context – How would the group of people the passage was written to have received it against the backdrop of their culture? Culture determines forms of communication and ways of understanding (i.e. agricultural society, views of men and women, family life, etc.).
- d. Theological context – Where does it fit in the progressive nature of revelation? What did the author know about God and His plan? How did the people worship?

Comparison – Comparing your passage with the rest of Scripture will (1) increase understanding and (2) guard against distortions. Tools that assist in comparison include a concordance, Bible dictionary, and Word Study dictionary. When you come across difficult sections or concepts of Scripture, a specific character is mentioned, or you are trying to grasp the meaning of a word, comparison will be a necessary tool.

Consultation – Consultation involves the use of your secondary sources, such as Bible commentaries, to shed light on a text and help you understand it better. It also can be used to confirm the interpretation that you have come to in your own study. These tools are to only be used after you have done your own study. Avoid both the arrogance of “God will speak to me, I don’t need someone else” and also avoid being too dependent on these sources.

Once this is complete and the text is understood, application can be made.

Keys to Life-Changing Application:

9 Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to mark?
9. Is there a challenge to face?

4 Steps in Application:

1. **Know** – (1) The text and (2) yourself. Take a spiritual inventory of your personal life, your family life, your church life, your community, etc.
2. **Relate** – The Word of God affects every area of your life. How does what you have learned affect your relationship with God, friends, and enemies?
3. **Meditate** – It’s not quantity. It’s quality.
4. **Practice** – Knowledge without any change is useless.

Introduction to 1 John

The First Epistle of John is an intensely practical letter addressed to Christian readers. It warns against the dangers of false teaching and exhorts believers to live lives of obedience to God and to love their brothers and sisters. The book's theme centers on fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1:3).

Authorship

The epistle has been traditionally ascribed to John the Apostle. The author's name, however, does not occur in the letter. It is plain, though, from the tone of the letter as a whole that the writer possessed spiritual authority. Moreover, he placed himself among the eyewitnesses to the incarnate life of the Lord Jesus (1:1-2). Early Christian writers including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian cited the epistle as John's. There is thus no good reason for denying the traditional belief that the letter is of apostolic authorship.

Background

The letter contains no hint about the identity or location of the readers beyond the fact that they are Christians. Since early church tradition associates John with the Roman province of Asia (in western Turkey), it has often been thought that the readers lived there. This may well be true, especially since this association is confirmed by Revelation 2 and 3.

The readers had been confronted with false teachers, whom John called antichrists (1 John 2:18-26). The exact character of these false teachers has been much discussed. Many have thought they were Gnostics who held to a strict dualism in which spiritual and material things were sharply distinguished. Others have seen the letter as directed against Docetism, the belief that Jesus' humanity was not real and that He only appeared to have a physical body. Often too, the letter is thought to refute the heresy of Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus was only a man and that the divine Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism and left Him before the Crucifixion.

It is not possible to be precise about the exact character of the false teaching which John opposed in his letter. The only certain data is what is found in the epistle itself. It is clear that the antichrists denied that Jesus is the Christ (2:22). The statements in 5:6 may well be intelligible against the backdrop of a teaching like that of Cerinthus. The strong claims made in 1:1-2 about the physical reality of the Incarnation would be appropriate if Docetism were in view. The emphasis on "knowing" God fits the view that the heretics made special claims to "knowledge" as the Gnostics did. But Gnosticism is chiefly known from sources much later than 1 John and many characteristics of later Gnostic thought do not find reflection in the epistle.

It is probably a mistake to attempt to systematize the thought of the heretics whom John opposed in this letter. According to his own statements, he had "many" false teachers in view (2:18; 4:1). There is no reason to think that all of them held exactly the same views. The ancient Greco-Roman world was a Babel of religious voices, and it is likely that the readers were confronted by a variety of ideas. Still, the heretics had in common their denials of the person of Christ, though they could have done so in different ways. On the basis of 2:19 it may be suggested that they had originated chiefly in Judea (see comments on 2:19).

That the initial readers were indeed Christians is clear from 2:12-14, 21; and 5:13. The reference to "the anointing" which they possessed (2:20, 27), that is, the Holy Spirit, might also suggest that the addressees were principally the leaders of the church or churches to which John

wrote. In the Old Testament the leaders of Israel—prophets, priests, and kings—were often anointed to their offices. While it is conceivable that 1 John 2:20 and 27 refer to an “anointing” which is true of all Christians, this kind of idea is rare in the New Testament. Even 2 Corinthians 1:21 may refer to Paul’s apostolic office. Possibly therefore, in 1 John 2:20 and 27 the writer sought to affirm the competency of the church leaders in the area of spiritual understanding and thus to shore up their authority as over against the false teachers. The leaders did not need to be taught by any human teachers since they were taught by their “anointing,” that is, by the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible to be dogmatic on this point. No doubt John knew the addressees when he wrote the epistle. Even if the leaders were primarily in view, the letter would naturally have been read to the entire congregation(s) since only in this way could it perform its purpose of supporting the established teachers’ authority. The larger audience could then receive the instruction which the letter contained while at the same time being encouraged to rely on the guidance offered by their Spirit-taught leadership. In the early church one of the chief responsibilities of the elders was to protect the flock from spiritual “wolves” (Acts 20:28-29; Titus 1:9-11). If the false teachers made grandiose claims to spiritual wisdom and authority, it would make good sense for the inspired author to affirm his confidence in the regular church leaders. This would strengthen their hands with their congregation(s) in resisting the inroads of heretical ideas.

It might be thought, however, that the references to “children,” “fathers,” and “young men” (1 John 2:12-14) point to an audience of people of varying levels of spiritual attainment. If so, the leadership alone can hardly be considered as the principal addressees. On the other hand all the readers were addressed by this writer as “children” (e.g., 2:1, 18) and the terms used in 2:12-14 may simply be ways of addressing the same people viewed from different standpoints.

In any case the letter was no doubt intended ultimately for the warning and instruction of the whole church or churches to which it was sent. And its truths are richly applicable to every Christian’s experience.

Date

Virtually nothing in the epistle indicates a specific date or period for its writing. Many conservatives suggest a date late in the first century A.D., about the time of or shortly after the writing of the Fourth Gospel. But a good case can be made for dating the Gospel of John sometime prior to A.D. 70. If this is done, there is no particular reason why 1 John may not be assigned to the same period of time. If 2:19 suggests that the false teachers had seceded from the Palestinian churches which the apostles supervised, then this perhaps can be taken to indicate a time before the calamities of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in A.D. 66-70. After this period the influences (both good and bad) of Palestinian Christianity on the Gentile churches must have greatly decreased. If the reference of 2:19 is indeed to Palestine, then John may well have been writing from Jerusalem when he stated, “They went out from us.”

These deductions are far from firm, but they might be taken to point to a date for the epistle somewhere between A.D. 60 and 65. But it must be admitted that an even earlier date cannot be excluded. Whatever the actual date of writing, the epistle gives truths of timeless value to the Christian church.¹

¹Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1 Jn 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Preparation

The process of studying Scripture should always move from observation to interpretation to application. When the background and context are known and all the details have been observed from a verse or passage, the correct interpretation can be determined. When it is correctly interpreted, there are endless ways to apply its meaning to our lives. And most importantly, as we seek to understand and apply the fullness of God's Word, we must know and depend on His Holy Spirit to illumine us. Take this time to pray and ask that the Lord, through His Spirit and by faith, would open your eyes and give you understanding into His precious and magnificent promises, not only to know them intellectually but to apply them to every area of your life. Ask that through this time He would "conform you more into the image of His Son" so that in "whatever you do, in word or deed, you would do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:17).

Our study this week will begin with an overview of 1 John so that we may get a general perspective of the book before going deeper into its contents. An overview allows us to see the message of the book as a whole, understand its purpose, become aware of its structure, and identify its main themes. It may serve you best to complete this study slowly throughout the week, reading the book at least one time daily.

Because observation is the key to meaningful Bible study, begin today by reading through the book of I John. Once you have done so, make some general notes in the boxes below.

General Observation of 1 John

Observation Summary on 1 John
What are the key and/or repeated words that are vital to understanding 1 John?
What is the theme or controlling idea that holds all of the parts together?

What is the purpose of the book?

Repeated themes:

Key verse(s) that reflects the theme(s):

Read each chapter again and develop a theme for each. Make sure that each chapter theme ties in with the overall theme and that it is the main idea conveyed in the chapter.

Chapter Themes
1
2
3
4
5

Now that you have a general picture of the entire book, narrow your focus to I John 1:1-4.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Record observations and write questions that come to mind from each verse.

v. 1	v. 2
v. 3	v. 4

Observation Questions:

1. From these verses, how can you surmise that John wrote this letter?
2. What point is John trying to make in vs. 1?
3. When John is saying “we,” who is he talking about?
4. In this passage, what are some different names and/or terms used to describe Jesus?
5. What are the two purposes John states for writing this letter?
6. Does John perceive the recipients to be Christians? Explain.
7. How would the recipients have fellowship with John?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. John starts off by connecting Jesus’ eternity and his humanity. Why would he find this important enough that he would start the letter this way?
2. Why did John use so many different ways to name or describe Jesus? Explain the significance of each term or name.
3. The word order of the first 3 verses seems odd. Why might John have ordered his words this way? (Think back to grade school grammar: subject—verb—object)

4. Why does John insert a parenthetical phrase (v.2)? What does he want to clarify or emphasize?
5. Just from these first few verses, why is John writing to them?
6. What does true fellowship look like?
7. What does it mean for joy to be complete? Look at John 15: 9-11; 16:24; 17:13; Romans 15:13; and 2 John 12 for other examples of completed or full joy.

Application: How does this passage apply to me?

1. How have you experienced with your senses God moving lately?
2. How has this passage shaped, changed, or helped you understand Jesus better?
3. How has knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior changed the way you have fellowship with other people?
4. Do you truly have fellowship with other Christians? How so or why not?
5. How does this passage encourage you in your walk with Christ?
6. What warnings does this passage give to you in your life in Christ?
7. How can you apply this passage to your life?

Memorization

Memorize I John 2:1-2 this week.

Preparation

Begin by prayerfully approaching the Word of God. The only way this will be a life-changing study is if the Holy Spirit is guiding you. Pray that you would have an open heart to what God wants to teach you and ask that all distraction be removed from you as you begin your study.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read through the passage several times, making observations as you go. Take note of any transition words or small details that affect meaning.

1:5	1:6
1:7	1:8
1:9	1:10
2:1	2:2

Observation Questions:

1. From 1:7, what are the results of walking in the light?

2. From 2:1, what does John say is the purpose of this passage?

3. What are the three errors of thought that John addresses in this passage (vs. 6, 8, and 10)?
4. What attributes of God are revealed in this passage?
5. From verse 5, what is the message, who does it come from, and who is it for?
6. In 1:7 and 2:2, what roles does Christ play in our lives?
7. In verse 9, how does John say we should act towards our sin?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

Word Study: Light

1 John 1:7 "...but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from sin."

Look at how light is used in these passages: 1 Thess. 5:5, John 8:12, 1 Peter 2:9, and Romans 3:12.

- a. From these verses, what is "the light" and its significance to God's children?
 - b. What affect does light have on darkness?
 - c. From this passage and the verses given, how is one able to "walk in the light as He is in the light"? (2 Cor. 4:6, Rom. 8:13, 13:12, Gal. 5:16)
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1. How does the confession in verse 9 differ from the confession talked about in James 5:16? What is the purpose of confession if all your sins have already been forgiven and cleansed?

2. What is the significance of having Jesus Christ as our Advocate before the Father? What does it mean to be an advocate?

3. Define propitiation. What does it mean that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins?

4. In this passage, John uses a lot of conditional statements connecting our words with our actions. How does John use these types of statements to make a distinction between believers and non-believers? Why is this important?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. What areas of your life are you still walking in the darkness (v. 8)?

2. What areas of your life are you walking in the light?

3. What truths from this passage can you be more diligent in practicing?

4. Are you or anyone else you know believing any of the three lies John addresses in this passage? Explain.

5. How can this passage help you minister to those who profess Christ, but do not demonstrate by their lives that they know Him?

6. What are 3 ways you can apply this message to your life?

Record 1 John 2:2 from memory.

Memorization

Memorize I John 2:5 this week.

Preparation

Pray and ask God for His Spirit to make the Word of God clear to you today. Ask Him to help you avoid letting the study of I John become an academic routine, void of spiritual significance and meaning for your life. Ask the Lord to renew your heart in this study and give you a fresh perspective on God's Word today.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read I John 2:3-11.

- Pay attention to the context, not only of chapter 2, but the broader context of the entire book. Remember that this is one message, not a disjointed set of separate ideas randomly stuck together.
- Pay attention to repeated words or phrases, contrasted words, and difficult terms.

Re-read the passage and record your observations in the grid.

v.3	v.4
v.5	v.6
v.7	v.8
v.9	v.10

v.11	
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Observation Questions:

1. From this passage, what characterizes those who know Christ?
2. Based on verse 6, what is the result of abiding in Christ?
3. From this passage, what characterizes those who don't know Christ?
4. What are the different words of contrast John uses throughout the passage?
5. What is the old commandment? What is the new commandment?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

Word Study: know

Greek Word: *Ginosko*

It would be beneficial to use some study tools to help you understand the meaning of the word and provide cross-references:

- *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*
- *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words*
- *Nave's Topical Bible*
- Bible Dictionary

Cross References:

Final Definition:

Interpretation Questions:

1. In verses 3-5, John speaks about the importance of knowing Christ. How is obedience connected to knowing Christ?
2. According to verse 5, how is the love of God perfected in believers? What does this look like?
3. Read John 15:1-10. In verse 6, John talks about those who say they abide in Him. What does it mean to abide in Christ? What does it look like in daily life?
4. Read Matthew 5:21-26 and 1 John 4:20-21. From these and verses 9-11, how does someone's relationship with others correspond to their relationship with God?
5. In verses 4, 6, and 9, John writes "The one who says..." What is he trying to communicate to the recipients here?
6. In verses 7 and 8, the old commandment (Leviticus 19:18) and the new commandment (John 13:34-35) to love one another are referenced. How can this be both an old and new commandment?
7. Why does John use the words "light" and "dark" to compare and contrast?
8. Why does John use the word "know" repeatedly?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. From this passage, what areas of your life demonstrate that you know Jesus Christ?

2. Does increasing your knowledge of Christ increase your obedience? Explain.

3. Is it possible to hate your brother and love the Lord? Is there anyone that you need to be reconciled with? What are practical steps to take to reconcile your relationship with them?

4. Describe a time when you have chosen to love someone you were tempted to hate. How has that affected your relationship with them?

5. What are areas in your life where you are not abiding in Him? What are steps you can take to change them?

6. What areas do you walk in light and what areas do you walk in darkness? Explain how you know the difference.

7. What are 3 ways you can apply this passage to your life?

Record 1 John 2:5 from memory.

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 2:15-16 this week.

Preparation

Take this time to pray and ask that the Lord, through His Spirit and by faith, would open your eyes and give you understanding into His precious and magnificent promises, not only to know them intellectually but to apply them to every area of your life. Ask that through this time He would “conform you more into the image of His Son” so that in “whatever you do, in word or deed, you would do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:17).

Observation: What does the passage say?

Begin your study by making several observations for each verse in the passage. Record them below.

v. 12	v. 13
v. 14	v. 15
v. 16	v. 17

Observation Questions

1. After examining verses 12-14, write down the spiritual characteristics you see in the:
 - a. “little children”:
 - b. “young men”:
 - c. “fathers”:

2. Is John actually writing to physical children, young men, and fathers? What do commentaries say?

3. Look at 1 John 5:19, John 12:31, and 14:30. According to these verses, what is “the world” and “the things in the world” that verse 15 in our passage refers to? What are the three things verse 16 says are “in the world”?

4. The word “lust” in the Greek means “desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust.” What is the difference between “the lust of the flesh” and “the lust of the eyes”? How did Eve’s eyes affect her decision making in Genesis 3:1-6?

5. What does John say is true about a person if they love the world?

6. According to verse 17, what is passing away and what is not passing away?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. Why does God save people for “His name’s sake”? How does God receive glory through salvation?

2. Verses 12-14 give us a picture of three stages of spiritual maturity. What does John say is the experience in each stage?
 - Children:

 - Young Men:

 - Fathers:

3. In verse 15, the word “love” is the word “agapao” in the Greek, which means “to be well pleased, to be contented with”. What specifically is John telling them they are not supposed to be “contented with”? How does John want them to respond to their world?

4. Is being tempted wrong? Find Scripture that proves your answer. Based upon your answer, why does John warn them about the “lust of the eyes”?
5. Why would John warn them against “the pride of life”? How does pride affect a Christian’s walk with the Lord?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. After examining the characteristics of the 3 stages of spiritual growth, what stage are you in? Explain. What are barriers in your personal walk that keep you from moving to the next stage?
2. If your sins have been forgiven for “His name’s sake”, then what should be your life’s focus as a believer? How should circumstances affect you?
3. What specifically are some things in the world that you are “contented with”? How has this hindered your obedience to the Lord?
4. How has pride affected your past? How is it presently affecting your life?
5. Verse 17 is the climax of this section of Scripture. It is easy to get caught up in this present world, but John reminds us this world is passing away. What area in your life do you need a perspective change from worldly to spiritual?
6. What are three things you have learned from this lesson that you can directly apply to your life?

From memory, write 1 John 2:15-16 here:

Memorization

As you study this week, memorize your choice of 1 John 2:23 or 1 John 2:27.

Preparation

Before you get into this week's passage, take some time to call upon the name of the Lord. Pray that He would open your eyes so that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Psalm 119:18). Pray that He would give you understanding, by the work of His Spirit, that you should keep His Word (Psalm 119:34). Pray that He would incline your heart to His testimonies and not to dishonest gain (Psalm 119:36). Lastly, pray and ask Him that through this fruitful time of study and renewing of your mind, that He would conform you more into the image of His Son, which is the very reason He has granted you salvation by His amazing grace (Romans 8:29, 12:2).

Observation: What does the passage say?

Carefully study the passage and make at least 3-4 observations for each verse.

v. 18	v. 19
v. 20	v. 21
v. 22	v. 23
v. 24	v. 25
v. 26	v. 27

v. 28	v. 29
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Observation Questions

1. According to verse 18, how does John know that we are in the last hour?

2. Verse 18 refers to “the Antichrist” and “many antichrists”. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, 9-10. According to these verses, who is “the Antichrist”?

3. What is an antichrist? Look at Acts 20:28-30 for further clarification.

4. According to this week’s passage, what are some characteristics of those who are saved?

5. What is the anointing? What do we receive from the anointing?

6. What sets believers and non-believers/phony believers apart in this passage?

7. What does verse 24 say believers need to abide in? Who then will they be abiding in?

8. From verse 28, what is the purpose of abiding in Him?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. Why did John write the truth to people who already knew the truth?

2. What was the importance of John teaching believers that they were living in the “last hour”? Why did they need to know about antichrists?

3. What does it mean to be anointed?

4. Since John warned the believers about deceivers within the church, how were they supposed to discern between truth and lies? Read John 14:26-27. How does knowing truth connect with having peace? How could knowing truth set these believers free?

5. John tells these believers to abide in what they heard from the beginning. The word “abide” in Greek means “to be held, kept, continually”. What is the importance of them holding to these truths continually?

6. Consider Eph. 4:11-13 in light of verse 27 from our passage. If John is saying that the anointing will teach them, what is the purpose of having teachers within the church?

7. Why was John concerned about them being ashamed at Christ’s coming?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. If the believers in 1 John were told 2,000 years ago it was the last hour, how and why should you live like it is the last hour?

2. Knowing you are anointed, how has it affected your life? What have been some teachable moments from the Holy Spirit?

3. Most of the bondage to sin believers experience is a result of a lie they believe. Consider the areas in your life where you are enslaved to sin. What is the lie you believe that has led you into bondage to that sin? What is the Scriptural truth that proves the lie to be false?

4. What are some blessings you have experienced from abiding in the truth? What are some ways you can abide more in truth?

5. How can you discern properly between those who teach truth and those who deceive?

6. What is one thing from this passage you have learned that you plan on directly applying to your life?

Write the verse you chose from memory.

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 3:2-3 this week.

Preparation

Pray for wisdom, understanding, and depth of insight as you begin your study today. Every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of heavenly lights, in whom there is no change or shifting shadow (James 1:17). All goodness is found in Him, therefore, He is to be feared. We can humbly pray as Paul did in Philippians 1:9 that our love would abound more and more in true knowledge and depth of insight, that we would be able to choose what is best and be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, and that we would be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God the Father.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read 1 John 3:1-10 several times. After doing so, make 2-3 observations for each verse in the grid below.

v.1	v.2
v.3	v.4
v.5	v.6

v.7	v.8
v.9	v.10

Observation Questions:

1. John reminds his readers of God's great love by developing the concept of spiritual adoption in verse 1. What is spiritual adoption and how is it a demonstration of God's love?

2. What appearing in verse 2 referring to? Why will seeing Him cause Christians to be like Him?

3. How does John define sin in verse 4? What connection does sin have with the law of God?

4. What can we know about Christ from this passage? What purposes does this passage give as to why Christ came to earth?

5. Throughout the passage, the children of God and the children of the devil are contrasted. Describe the characteristics of each that you see in the text.
 - a. Children of God

- b. Children of the devil
6. What reason does verse 9 give as to why no one born of God makes a practice of sinning?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. In verse 1, what does it mean that the world doesn't know us? Why is the world's knowledge of Christians related to their knowledge of God?
2. What is John's purpose in mentioning the second coming of Christ in verses 2-3? How does this set the stage for his discussion of sin and righteousness in verses 4-10?
3. According to verse 3, what does it mean to hope in God and how does it relate to purity?
4. John uses verse 4 to define sin as lawlessness. What does lawlessness mean? Is it more related to a breaking of the law or an inability by nature to keep the law? Consider Romans 8:5-8 and explain your answer.
5. John develops the idea of abiding or remaining in verse 6. What does it mean to abide? What relationship does the ability to abide have with the possibility of living righteously? See John 15:1-11.
6. How do we balance John's claims in verse 6 that there should be no sin in those who believe with his previous statements in the book that support the idea believers will sin? Consider the following scriptures:
 - a. Supporting sinlessness-1 John 2:3; 3:6,9; 1 John 4:8; 1 John 5:18
 - b. Not supporting sinlessness-1 John 1:8-10; 2:1; 3:2; 5:16-17
7. John uses progressive terms (keep on, practice, continue) in regards to sin & righteousness in verses 7-9. Why is this significant in determining the implications of the text?

8. John uses absolute terms throughout the passage (everyone, no one). What is his purpose in doing this?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. What does it mean in verse 2 that you will be like Christ? What will be different about you when He appears than the way things are now?
2. Do you ever struggle with doubt that you are a child of God? How does this passage affect your perspective that you are His child?
3. How should hope in the return of Christ (verse 3) affect the lifestyle of a Christian? Does the prospect of the second coming impact the way that you live? Consider Colossians 3:1-5.
4. How often do you focus on the second coming of Christ? Do you have trouble focusing on His return because of today's problems and challenges?
5. In verses 6-9, John uses verbs that emphasize continuous action (keep on, practice, continue) to state that Christians do not practice sin or keep on sinning. Are there any habitual sins in your life? What are you doing to eliminate them? See Colossians 2:20-3:3 and 1 John 1:9.
6. Verse 6 emphasizes the importance of abiding or remaining in Christ as the means to not sin. How well are you abiding in Christ? What are some things you can do to improve on that?
8. What is one thing you learned from this week's study that you can directly apply to your life?

Record 1 John 3:2-3 from memory.

Memorization

As you study this week, memorize your choice of 1 John 3:16 or 1 John 3:18.

Preparation

As always, begin with prayer today. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you clarity and understanding, believing that “the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” and then reveals to us the mind of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10) If we seek the Lord’s help, we can be confident in our observation, interpretation, and application.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read the passage several times and make 4-5 observations for each verse.

v.11	v.12
v.13	v.14
v.15	v.16
v.17	v.18
v.19	v.20
v.21	v.22

Observation Questions:

1. What is “the message they have heard from the beginning”?
2. According to verse 14, what indicates how someone can know they have passed from death to life?
3. What “test” does verse 17 establish regarding how someone can know whether the love of God abides in them?
4. From verse 18, how are believers supposed to love?
5. Based on verse 20, why can someone have assurance before God?
6. What two reasons does verse 22 give as to why believers will receive what they ask from God?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. John gives an example of what love is not (v. 12) immediately following his command in verse 11 to love one another. Why does he use Cain as an example? What insight does it give as to how believers are to love one another? The context of the story can be found in Genesis 4:1-8.
2. Why should followers of Christ not be surprised if the world hates them? Why would the world hate a group of people whose goal is to love others?
3. John contrasts murder in verse 15 with Christ laying down His life in verse 16. What point is John making in these two verses about how believers are to live? How does the use of contrast help him to establish his point? Consider Matthew 5:21-22 and John 15:13.

4. In verse 16, what does it mean to “lay down our lives” for others? How were they supposed to tangibly do this?
5. What is the difference (v. 18) between loving with word or with tongue and loving in deed and truth? Is loving with actions considered good and loving with words considered bad or are both important for Christians to demonstrate? Explain.
6. Why does John repeatedly mention the heart from verses 17-21? In verse 20, what does the “heart condemns us” mean? How is someone’s heart connected with their love for others and their assurance before God?
7. Is there any connection between how believers live and whether God gives them what they ask for in prayer? What happens with the prayer of believers who are not keeping God’s commands or pleasing Him?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. What does it look like for the world to hate Christians in our culture? How have you experienced hate from the world?
2. Towards whom specifically do you experience feelings of hate (vs. 15) or anger? How can you deal with these feelings biblically?
3. Why is it difficult to lay down your life (v. 16) for others? How can you more effectively put the needs of others before your own desires? Consider 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.
4. When have you seen someone in need and closed your heart towards them by withholding your help? Is there anything you can do to ensure that you will not close your heart the next time an opportunity arises? Explain.

5. John emphasizes in verse 18 to not just say you love people but to demonstrate your love to others. Think of a specific person in each category below and identify three ways that you can demonstrate love “in deed and truth” to them:
 - a. A spouse or roommate:
 - b. A co-worker or classmate:
 - c. A family member:
6. What effect does God’s total knowledge (v. 20) have on your lifestyle and faith? If you really believed in His omniscience and trusted His promises, then why do you continue to struggle with sin and anxiety about the future?
7. When do you struggle with self-condemnation or guilt (v. 20)? How can this week’s passage help you battle against these feelings when they occur?
8. How does the way you live affect how you pray? How do feelings of guilt hinder your ability or desire to pray? Explain.

Record the verse you chose from memory.

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 4:1 this week as you study the passage.

Preparation

Are you ready to discover truth from God's Word and apply it to your life? You've probably discovered that the greatest preparation for any Bible study is prayer! Stop now and ask God to illuminate your study through the working and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read 1 John 3:23-4:6.

After reading through the entire passage several times, develop a title that encompasses the main theme the passage conveys.

Passage Title:

Write your observations for each verse in the following chart:

3:23	3:24
4:1	4:2
4:3	4:4
4:5	4:6

Observation Questions:

1. In verses 23-24, the word “commandment” is used three times. What is a commandment? Who proclaimed this commandment?
2. What is the result of obedience to God’s commands?
3. From this passage, what are all the things we can know about Jesus?
4. What did the false prophets believe about Jesus?
5. When John talks about spirits here, to what is he referring?
6. What two tests does John give for truth and falsehood?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. In verse 23, John emphasizes the need for proper belief and love. How do these two go together and cooperate with one another? For a Christian, can you have one without the other?
2. John has talked previously about abiding in Christ. Again, what does it mean to abide in Christ? Look at John 15 for insight. What does it mean for Him to abide in us?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our abiding in Christ and Him abiding in us?
4. Why was it so important for the recipients to have a proper understanding of Jesus? What would be the ramifications otherwise?

5. Why was Jesus coming in the flesh vital to John? Why was it such an important criteria for discerning truthful spirits and deceptive spirits?
6. From verses 4 and 6, what does it mean to “be from God”? In what ways are believers from God?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. In verse 24, it says that the Spirit lives and abides in you. How should that give you encouragement?
2. Do you regularly test the spirits or critically discern teaching? Explain an example where you discerned false teaching and how you concluded it to be false.
3. How does the world distort Jesus today? How can you minister to someone with distorted views of Jesus?
4. Do you live as though the Spirit that lives within you is greater than spirit of the devil that is in the world? Explain how so or why not.
5. How would you differentiate someone who is from the world and someone who is from God?
6. How faithful are you at hearing truthful teaching and responding by applying it to your life? Explain. How do you apply teaching to your life?
7. List three ways you can directly apply this passage to your life.

Record 1 John 4:1 from memory.

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 4:9-11.

Preparation

Don't be quick to skip the most important aspect of Bible study. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit so that He may imprint God's Word upon your head and heart today.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read through the passage several times, observing each detail. Write your observations in the chart below.

v. 7	v. 8
v. 9	v. 10
v. 11	v. 12
v. 13	v. 14
v. 15	v. 16

Observation Questions

1. What are some words or phrases that are repeated throughout this passage?

2. What are the reasons given for why the believers in 1 John should love one another?

3. According to these verses, what is some evidence that a believer knows God and abides in Him?

4. Since God is love, according to this passage, what are some things that believers have received as a result of God's love?

5. How is love displayed in this passage by:
 - a. God

 - b. Jesus Christ

 - c. John

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. The Greek word used here for "love" means "brotherly love, affection, good will, benevolence". After studying these verses, is love a feeling or an action? Do believers have a choice in loving?

2. Because God is love, how does this innate characteristic affect His other characteristics (mercy, peace, judgment, wrath, etc.)?

3. What does the word "propitiation" mean? How is Christ our propitiation?

4. Notice how many times the word "know" is used throughout the passage. Verse 16 specifically talks about knowing and believing the love that God has for us. What relationship does knowledge and belief have in a person's walk with the Lord?

5. The word “abide”, repeated throughout verses 12-16, means in the Greek “to remain”. How were these believers to remain in the Lord?
6. What is the purpose of John writing the first sentence of verse 12? How does it relate to the other verses?
7. In verse 12, the word “perfected” in the Greek means “to complete, to add to what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full.” Read John 13:35 and Matthew 5:16. What was God’s purpose for making these believers full of His love?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. What keeps you from loving others the way you are told to love in this passage?
2. How has God’s love for you affected your life? Do you really live each day knowing the depth of God’s love for you?
3. Does your sin affect God’s love for you? Why or why not? How is your answer reflected in your relationship with the Lord?
4. How does your knowledge of God affect how you love God and others? What difference can faith make?
5. Considering your spiritual gifts, make a list of people you need to show love to and write out specific ways you can demonstrate love to them.
6. What are some specific ways in which you have experienced the power of God abiding within you?
7. What is one thing you have learned from this passage that you plan to directly apply to your life?

Record I John 4:9-11 from memory.

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 4:19 this week, one of the greatest summations of the gospel in all of Scripture.

Preparation

Begin by prayerfully approaching the Word of God. The only way this will be a life-changing study is if the Holy Spirit is guiding you. Pray that you would have an open heart to what God wants to teach you and ask that all distraction be removed from you as you begin your study.

Observation: What does the passage say?

By now, you've probably gotten pretty good at observation. Take time this week to slow down and observe carefully, answering the questions Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?

4:17	4:18
4:19	4:20
4:21	5:1
5:2	5:3
5:4	

Observation Questions

1. According to verse 17, what is the result of love's perfection? How does perfect love give believers confidence in the Day of Judgment?

2. Based on verse 18, how does love cast out fear?
3. Verse 19 reveals the relationship between God's love and the love of a believer. What is that relationship? How does love that responds to God's love differ from love that tries to initiate God's love?
4. What reasons do 4:21 and 5:1 give as to why we should love our brothers?
5. John indicates in verse 1 that faith is evidence of being born of God. What other indicators of salvation does John give throughout this book? Consider 1 John 2:29; 3:9 & 4:7.
6. Verse 3 defines the love of God as containing two components. Identify both.
7. John shifts in verse 4 from his development of the concept of love to speaking about faith. What is the connection between love and faith that he establishes in vv. 3-4?
8. In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul speaks of faith, hope & love. Each of these three themes can be seen in this week's passage. Identify the places in the passage where John mentions each.

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. What does it mean, according to verse 17, for love to be perfected? Is it the idea that love is made flawless or is it the idea that love is completed, finished, and accomplished? Explain.
2. Look back at 1 John 3:18-19. What insight does it provide as to how love is perfected in the life of a believer?
3. Returning to this week's passage, what does it mean in verse 18 that perfect love casts out fear? How are love and fear related?
4. Verse 18 says in a negative way ("the one who fears is not perfected in love") the same thing that verse 17 says in a positive way ("love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence"). What is the relationship between perfected love and a believer's view of the day of judgment?
5. In verse 20, is John saying that it is easier to love your brothers because you can see them than it is to love God whom you cannot see? Consider 1 John 4:7.

6. According to verse 2, what is the relationship between loving God, keeping His commandments, and loving the children of God?
7. In verse 3, John culminates his discussion of love by defining the love of God. Considering this verse and John 14:21, 23-24, write your own definition of what it means to love God.
8. John mentions in verse 4 that being born of God and having faith in Christ are the keys to overcoming the world through love. How do these two things combine with love to help believers overcome the trials and temptations in the world?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. In this passage, John teaches that loving God helps you love others. Do you find it is easier to love God or to love others in your life? What are some ways that you can improve in the area of love that is more difficult for you? Consider 1 John 4:12.
2. Do you ever struggle with fear about death or the Day of Judgment? If Christians are confident about the Day of Judgment then why do they struggle with the fear of death? What insight from this passage can you use to bolster your confidence or the confidence of others who experience doubt?
3. Does fear affect your ability to love and receive love from others? How does fear hinder your relationships of love with God and others?
4. Verse 19 reveals that your love for God is a response to His love for you. What are some ways that you can keep a fresh sense of God's love for you? How does a proper view of His love impact your daily life?
5. Verse 3 reveals that loving God is achieved by keeping God's commands with a willing spirit. Do you struggle more with obeying the word of God (keeping His commandments) or doing it with proper motivation (His commandments are not burdensome)? Explain.

6. This week's passage embodies the 1 Corinthians 13:13 concept of faith, hope, and love. Of these three, which one do you struggle with the most in your personal relationship with Christ? What are some ways that you or someone else who struggles with one of these can improve in your trouble area?

7. What is one thing you learned this week that you can directly apply to your life?

Record 1 John 4:19 from memory.

Memorization

Memorize: 1 John 5:5

Preparation

If there is unconfessed sin in your heart, confess and repent of it knowing that He is faithful and just to forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Ask Him to give you, by His Spirit, understanding of His Word in such a way that it will transform and renew your mind and conform you more into the image of His Son (Romans 12:2, 8:29). Ask the Lord to illuminate and open your eyes so that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Psalm 119:18). Ask God to empower you to be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only (James 1:22-25).

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read 1 John 5:5-12.

Re-read the passage in several translations making observations of the different verses as you go:

v.5	v.6
v.7	v.8
v.9	v.10
v.11	v.12

Observation Questions:

1. From verse 5, how does someone overcome the world?
2. What reason does verse 6 give as to why the Spirit testifies?
3. Verses 6-8 discuss the three things that testify about Jesus Christ. Use the following verses to describe each of them. Based on these passages, how does each of them testify?
 - a. The Spirit (John 16:12-15, Romans 8:16-17, Ephesians 1:13)
 - b. The water (Matthew. 3:13-17, Romans 6:4)
 - c. The blood (Matthew. 26:27-28, John 6:53-56)
4. According to verses 9 and 11, what is the testimony of God?
5. In verses 10-12, what are the results of believing the testimony? What are the consequences of not believing?
6. Based on verse 11, where does eternal life come from?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. What does it mean to overcome the world?
2. What does it mean that Jesus came by water and by blood? Why is this important?
3. What is a testimony? Why is it important that these three testify about Jesus Christ? (Deuteronomy 19:15, John 8:17, 2 Corinthians 13:1)

4. How does unbelief alter someone's perception of God?
5. From John 10:10 and this passage, what does it mean to have eternal life and when does it begin?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. How have you failed to overcome the world? What are some ways that you can overcome the world? Consider the following verses: John. 16:33, Romans. 12:21, 1 John 2:13-14, 1 John 4:4.
2. What areas of your life testify to others that you believe Jesus is the Son of God?
3. What ways in your life have you made God a liar by not trusting Him?
4. This passage makes it clear that eternal life comes through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and earlier in this book John connects belief in Jesus Christ with obedience to His commands. What areas of your life have you not connected your faith with obedience to His commands?
5. What are three things you can apply to your life from this passage?

Record 1 John 5:5 from memory here:

Memorization

Memorize 1 John 5:13 this week.

Preparation

Pray and ask God for His Spirit to make the Word of God clear to you today. Ask Him to help you avoid letting the study of I John become an academic routine, void of spiritual significance and meaning for your life. Ask the Lord to renew your heart in this study and give you a fresh perspective on God's Word today.

Observation: What does the passage say?

Read through the passage several times, making observations as you go. Record them below.

v. 13	v. 14
v. 15	v. 16
v. 17	v. 18
v. 19	v. 20
v. 21	

Observation Questions:

1. In this passage John sums up the point of everything he has previously written. What does he say is the purpose of this letter? What effect did he want his teaching to produce?

2. How does John say a believer's assurance of salvation affects his relationship to God and his prayer life? Look back at 3: 21-22 for another example.
3. What is John trying to tell the recipients in verse 15? What purpose does this verse serve?
4. Explain sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death. Look at 1 Corinthians 11:30; Deuteronomy 22:26; and Numbers 18:22 for help.
5. According to verses 18-20, what are the three statements the recipients should know from this epistle?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. From verse 1, what does it mean to believe in the name of something?
2. In verse 14, the Greek word "to hear" means "to hear favorably," i.e. God will answer our prayers. What is the condition attached and what does the condition mean?
3. In verse 18, is John saying that a Christian never sins? What does John mean by saying this? Refer back to 1:8 and 3:6 for insights.
4. The last verse in the epistle seems abrupt, since John has nowhere previously spoken of worshipping material images and false gods. How does this verse connect with the previous verse and the epistle as a whole?
5. What theme in this passage is similar to how the epistle begins in 1: 1-2? And how does this theme relate to everything in between the introduction and conclusion?
6. What does it mean that the world lies in the power of the evil one (verse 19)? How do you see this to be true today?

Application: How does the passage apply to me?

1. From verse 18, how has Jesus kept you safe from sin lately?
2. List a few times when your prayers were outside of God's will. Looking back on those times, what have you learned from them?
3. In verse 14, it talks about God answering the prayers of those who are in Christ and praying according to His will, yet it is a common Christian experience that prayer is not always answered. How do you explain that in your life?
4. If nothing else, verses 16-17 serve as a reminder for Christians to be in prayer for those that are in sin—both Christians and unbelievers. Who do you need to pray for and how are you to pray for them in accordance with God's will? How are you to pray for unbelievers living in sin and believers living in sin?
5. If you truly live in understanding that Christ keeps you and Satan cannot touch you, how should that affect your life?
6. What are areas of your life where you struggle with idolatry? How can you overcome this with the truth of Christ?
7. What are ways you can apply this passage to your life?

Record 1 John 5:13 from memory.

Congratulations! You've completed your current study of 1 John. Thank God for all He has taught you through it and ask Him to write its truths upon your heart.