

Worksheet 1: Overview of 1-3 John

Background

You may want to consult a study Bible or Bible dictionary for help with these questions.

1. Who is the human author of these letters? What do we know about him? (his background, his ministry, his culture)
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2. Who are the recipients of these letters? What do we know about them? (their relationship to the author, their circumstances, their relationship to God, their relationship to each other)
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Major Themes

Read through 1-3 John in one sitting (takes about 20 minutes) and then answer the next few questions.

3. Why were these letters written? (Is the author addressing problems? Is his tone encouraging or confrontational? Does the author seem to have a primary purpose?)
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4. Using a set of colored pencils, highlight any repeated themes that you can find in 1 John. Can you identify two or three prominent themes? Are there any themes that seem to be related to each other? Explain.
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5. What topics from the text are you excited about discussing in the next 12 weeks?
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6. What questions do you have after reading through this book?
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Worksheet #2: 2 John 1-13

THE ELDER, To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth,² because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

⁴ I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.⁵ And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.⁶ This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

¹² Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

¹³ The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Who might be “the elect lady and her children” in v. 1? [Hint: You may want to consult a study Bible or commentary on this topic.]

2. What does it mean to love “in truth” (v. 1)?

3. If the truth “abides” in us (v. 2), what might John mean when he speaks of “the truth”? How does the truth “abide” in us?

4. Notice the phrases used to refer to Christ in v. 3. What are these phrases, and what do they tell us about the writer’s view of Him?

5. Does the writer place more value on truth or love in verse 3? Explain your answer, and reflect on what that means for daily Christian life.

6. Based on vv. 4–6, what seems to be the content of the “commandment”? State the commandment in your own words, trying to include everything the writer says about it in these verses.

7. Who are the “deceivers” described in v. 7? What is John describing when he says that “*this* is a deceiver and an antichrist” (my emphasis)?

8. The word translated “abide” (vv. 2, 9) can also be translated “remain” or “stay.” How does that help explain v. 9? Restate what John means in this verse.

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #3: 3 John 1–14 (NKJV)

THE ELDER, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

³ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

⁵ Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers,⁶ who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,⁷ because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

⁹ I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.

¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

¹² Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³ I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink;¹⁴ but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. When the Elder speaks of Gaius, he says that he “love[s him] in truth” (v. 1). What does it mean to love “in truth”?
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2. What does it mean to “walk in truth” (v. 4), and how can others see that a person is doing that?
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3. What does John mean when he describes the generosity of Gaius as a “faithful” act (v. 5)?
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4. What does it mean to support someone in “a manner worthy of God” (v. 6)?
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5. Why does John believe that supporting the emissaries in “a manner worthy of God” is a good thing (v. 6–7)? What is the result of this kind of action (v. 8)?
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6. What distinguishes Diotrephes from Gaius (v. 9–10)? Why are Diotrephes’ actions reprehensible?
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7. Explain this phrase: “He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God” (v. 11)?
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8. From what source does Demetrius derive his credibility (v. 12)?
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9. What do vv. 13–14 teach us about the biblical way to handle personal confrontation?
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Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?
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11. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
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Worksheet #4: 1 John 1:1–10 (NKJV)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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

⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Read John 1:1–18, and note any similarities you observe between these two passages.

1 John 1:1–10

John 1:1–18

2. What does John describe with the phrase, “the Word of life” (v. 1)? What does his use of this phrase teach?

3. What does the word “manifested” (v. 2) mean? [Hint: Consult a study Bible or commentary for help if necessary.]

4. What do we learn from John’s affirmation that he had “heard,” “seen,” and touched the Word in vv. 1, 2, and 3? Why does this matter?

5. The Greek word translated “fellowship” (vv. 3, 6, 7) means “to have something in common with someone.”¹ From the statements in this chapter, what do we share in common with Christ and other believers?

6. What is the difference between walking in “darkness” (v. 6) and walking in “light” (v. 7)?

7. What does God do on our behalf if we confess our sins (v. 9)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

¹ J. Y. Campbell, “Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 51 (December 1932): 352–80.

Worksheet #5: 1 John 2:1–11 (NKJV)

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.⁷ Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.⁸ Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

⁹ He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.¹⁰ He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.¹¹ But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. How does John's statement of purpose in 2:1 correspond to his purpose statement in 1:3-4?

2. What does it mean to have "Jesus Christ the righteous" as our advocate before the Father (2:1b)?

3. Look up the word "propitiation" (2:2) in a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other theological reference source and explain what it means.

4. In what sense does 1 John 2:3 provide assurance? In what sense does it provide a warning? How do verses 4 and 5 expand both aspects of this verse?

5. What is the basic expectation for a believer in Christ (2:6)?

6. What is the "old commandment" (singular) that John describes in verse 7? Compare 1 John 3:23, 4:21; 2 John 4-6 to understand this term. What is "old" about this command?

7. What is "new" about the command that John gives to the church (2:8), and why?

8. What test does John give in vv. 9-11 for evaluating the genuineness of one's profession of faith?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #6: 1 John 2:12–23 (NKJV)

¹² I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Verses 12–14 is one of the most rhetorically structured passages in this entire letter, perhaps partly to aid in memorization. Copy out the text of these verses below, placing parallel elements on the same line (v. 12 is done for you). As you do so, consider the purpose of this section. How does it relate to the material in 1:5–2:11? How does it relate to 2:15ff?

Verses 12–13

Verse 14

I write to you,

little children,

because your sins are forgiven you

for His name's sake.

2. Why might John address the particular groups that he does in vv. 12–14? What message did he wish to communicate to each group, and why might that message be appropriate?

3. The first command in 1 John appears in 2:15, and it is immediately followed by a strong statement of warning in the second half of the verse. How can the love of the world and the love of the Father be so mutually exclusive?

4. What can we learn about the original situation that occasioned this letter from the statements of 2:18–19?

5. What does it mean to “have an anointing from the Holy One” and to “know all things” (2:20)?

6. What does vv. 22–23 reveal as the error of the secessionists (who were originally mentioned in 2:19)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

7. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

8. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #7: 1 John 2:24–3:3 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

²⁶ These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. ²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. ²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

^{3:1} Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Compare 2:24 with 2:20–23. Based on the context, what must be the content of the message that the audience had “heard from the beginning”?

2. What reasons does John give in 2:25–27 for rejecting the teachings of the secessionists?

3. If “the anointing” is something that “abides” in you and “teaches” you, how can it ensure that you will “abide in Him” (2:27)?

4. Why does John command his readers to “abide in Him” in 2:28? Why would he feel such a command to be necessary, especially if doing so yields “confidence” and a lack of shame at His coming?

5. In 2:29, John writes that “*everyone* who practices righteousness is born of Him” (my emphasis). How can this statement can be true? How can the (hypothetical) converse statement—“everyone who practices *un*righteousness is *not* born of Him”—also be true?

6. What does it mean to be called “children of God” (3:1)?

7. What does John mean by saying, “it has not yet been revealed what we shall be” (3:2)? What will take place at the final revelation of Christ?

8. What does John mean by saying that a believer will “purify himself” (3:3)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #8: 1 John 3:4-15 (NKJV)

⁴ Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. ⁶ Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸ He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹² not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What is “lawlessness”? What do we learn about the term from its other occurrences in the New Testament (Matt. 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12; Rom. 4:7; 6:19; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Thess. 2:3, 7; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 1:9; 10:17)?

2. The word translated “abide” in 3:6 can also be translated “remain.” How does this additional nuance help to explain this verse?

3. Compare 3:7 with 2:26–27. How is it possible for John’s readers to be deceived?

4. In what way is the one who sins “of the devil” (3:8)?

5. What are the tests of genuine conversion that John defines in 3:10?

6. How is the story of Cain illustrative of John’s larger point in this passage? How does it introduce John’s point in 3:13ff?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

7. How can we apply the teaching of 3:13–15 to conflict within the church?

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #9: 1 John 3:16–24 (NKJV)

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

²⁴ Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Should we interpret “we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (v. 16) in a literal sense (describing martyrdom), in a figurative sense (describing willingness for self-sacrifice), or both? Support your answer from the context.

2. What does it mean to “shut up [your] heart” toward those within the church in physical or financial need (v. 17)? How does doing so demonstrate an absence of the love of God?

3. How does John’s exhortation to love in deed and truth (v. 18) produce assurance (v. 19)?

4. How is the omniscience of God a means of assurance (v. 20)?

5. What is the objective basis for assurance described in v. 22?

6. How do the two components of Christ’s commandment relate to each other (v. 23)?

7. What additional means of assurance (aside from obedience) do we find in v. 24?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. Consider how you have responded to the physical/financial needs of others within your church. Have your actions demonstrated that you have the love of God (v. 17)?

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #10: 1 John 4:1–11 (NKJV)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.⁵ They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. How does 3:24 help us understand the reference to the “spirits” in 4:1? Explain the relationship between the “spirits” and the “false prophets” in 4:1.

 2. Based on the test for spirits prescribed in 4:2–3a, what seems to have been part of the message taught by the “false prophets”? Specifically, what truth about Christ is denied, and in what sense would this denial be in “the spirit of antichrist” (4:3b)?

 3. Who is the person described as “He who is in you” who has overcome “he who is in the world” (4:4)? How does John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, 33 affect the way you read this verse?

 4. Who are the individuals (“they”) described as being “of the world” in verse 5? With whom does John contrast these individuals in verse 6, and what is the characteristic that distinguishes between “he who knows God” and “he who is not of God”?

 5. Why is it so important to John that we love one another (4:7)?

 6. What does it mean to be “born of” and “know” God (4:7)? How are these two ideas related?

 7. Why does John use the statement “God is love” as the reason behind his observation that “he who does not love does not know God” (4:8)?

 8. What does it mean to “live through Him” (4:9)?

 9. Review your notes on the meaning of the term “propitiation” (4:10) from your study of 1 John 2:2. You may want to consult a study Bible, commentary or Bible dictionary for some additional background on this term.

- Application:** Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.
10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

Worksheet #11: 1 John 4:12–21 (NKJV)

¹² No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. In what sense can it be true that “**no one** has seen God **at any time**” (4:12)? How would you reconcile this verse with John 1:18 and John 14:9? Why does John interrupt his discussion of the love of God with this sentence in 1 John 4:12?

2. How will we know when God’s love is “perfected” (lit. “made complete”) in us (4:12)? What can we learn from the other places where John uses the term “perfected” (1 John 2:5; 4:17–18)?

3. What does John present as evidence of mutual indwelling in 4:13? Compare and contrast the roles of the Father, Son and Spirit as described in 4:13–14.

4. What is “the love that God has for us” which we have “known” and “believed” (4:16)? In what sense can we “know” and “believe” this love? How does John 13:35 relate to this passage?

5. What does the “this” refer to in the beginning of 4:17, “Love has been perfected among us in **this**”? Does it refer to the preceding context, or the rest of the verse? How does this statement about love relate to the rest of the verse?

6. How does the love of God in the life of the believer eliminate fear (4:18)? What kinds of fear cannot coexist with love for God?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

7. How often have you thought that you loved God, while at the same time failed to love another believer (4:20)?

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #12: 1 John 5:1–13 (NKJV)

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶ This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.⁷ For there are three that bear witness* in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

* Vv. 7–8 contain an unusually lengthy textual variant. The words “in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth” do not appear in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. Only eight medieval manuscripts include this reading, and of these, four place it in the margin to indicate that the copyist considered it to be non-canonical. The long reading does not appear in any other modern English translation, such as the NASB, ESV, NET, HCSB, or NIV.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. In 5:1, John gives two indicators that reveal a person's relationship to God. What are those indicators, and how do these two indicators relate to each other?

2. What tests does John give us to evaluate whether we genuinely love the children of God (5:2)? How do these tests validate our love for others?

3. How does John define love for God in 5:3? Why then can he say that obedience is not "burdensome"?

4. What things (5:4, "whatever [not whoever] is born of God") might John have in mind that come from God? In what sense can these things be understood to "overcome the world"?

5. What might John have in mind with his references to "water" and "blood" in 5:6-8? You may wish to consult a study Bible or commentary for some ideas.

6. To what fact do the Spirit, the water, and the blood all bear witness (5:6)? Explain how these witnesses function as the "witness of God" (5:9).

7. How does the testimony of 5:11 produce the results in 5:12?

8. Consider John's purpose statement in 5:13. In what way does this purpose undergird everything else that he has said in this book?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet #13: 1 John 5:14–21 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

¹⁸ We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. How can John make such confident assertions in vv. 14–15?

2. Review what John says about sin in 1:7–10, 2:1–12, and 3:4–9. Summarize the teaching of each passage in one sentence. Then, attempt to craft one sentence that explains 5:16–17 in light of the full context of John’s teaching on sin in the life of the believer.

3. How does 5:18 warn us about claiming to believe in God and yet making no effort to turn from sin?

4. What does it mean to have received “understanding” from the Son of God (5:20)? What does John identify as the result of this knowledge/understanding in v. 20?

5. In what way is the warning in v. 21 to “keep yourselves from idols” an appropriate way to close this book?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

6. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

7. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Review: *Take a few moments to look back through your study of 1–3 John.*

8. What are some passages/topics in 1–3 John that you found to be particularly challenging?

9. What are some passages/topics in 1–3 John that you found particularly helpful?
