

## 1 John

- Background
  - John was in the inner circle of the disciples
  - John does not explicitly share his identity in the letter
    - We know that he wrote this letter historically as the early church identified it's author
    - Similarly, there are many similarities to the gospel of John (written by John himself)
  - The letter was written to believers
    - This indicates there were many different recipients in many different churches
  - The letter builds on some concepts from the gospel of John, meaning it was most likely written after the gospel
- 1 John 1
  - The word of life (1 John 1: 1-4)
    - This looks very similar to the start of the gospel of John
    - Here we see John depicting Jesus or the Holy Spirit
      - Jesus, who was with God from the start, came to earth (1 John 1: 1)
      - Jesus gave us light, that we may proclaim his glory (1 John 1: 2)
      - We share God's glory so that others may know it and unify under the name of Christ (1 John 1: 3)
    - The purpose of John's letter is to spur brothers and sisters in Christ on so that their unity may be pure (1 John 1: 4)
  - Walking in the Light (1 John 1: 5-10)
    - Saying you're a Christian isn't good enough (1 John 1: 6)
      - We are called to take up our cross and follow Jesus's teachings in all we do (Matthew 16: 24-26)
      - We are called to **flee** from sin
        - God hates sin so so so much
        - We shouldn't be content with living in it, since it separates us from God
        - If we really love God, how can we be okay with living in sin?
      - This is really convicting, but it really makes you ask what matters most in your life
        - We'll continue this thought later
      - Alternatively, by walking in the way of Christ, we find favor in the eyes of the Lord, and will be cleansed from sin (1 John 1: 7)
        - We aren't perfect, we're sinful humans
        - That said, we can't be content with that
        - God wants us to try, that's all he's asking, and only you know what that looks like for you

- Imagine two men, both are struggling with addiction
      - #1 fights for a few days but gives in to temptation in a moment of weakness
      - #2 gives up for a few days and decides he's bored so goes back to it
      - Which one do you think pleased God more?
      - I'm not saying anyone here is an addict in the general sense, but I can almost guarantee anyone here is addicted to some sin
        - Only you know where you stand with that personally
        - Don't lie to yourself about which one you are, #1 or #2
          - Doing so isn't of any gain to you, because God knows which one you are
- We are not to hide our sin from God (1 John 1: 8)
  - As I previously said, there's no point
  - God sees it all, so why bother hiding it?
    - He gives grace abundantly to those who ask, so we're only hurting ourselves (1 John 1: 9)
    - By not admitting our sin, we blaspheme the sacrifice of Jesus (1 John 1: 10)
      - Why? Because it undervalues both the severity of sin and his ability to cleanse us of our sin
      - More so, Jesus has said that we have all sinned, and by disagreeing with that, we aren't believing what we say we do
- 1 John 2
  - Christ our advocate (1 John 2: 1-6)
    - Sinning freely is not permissible (1 John 2: 1)
      - Though we have the sacrifice of Christ, we are to repent and grow to be more like Christ himself
      - If we do mess up and sin, however, we are forgiven through Christ's sacrifice (1 John 2: 1b-2)
        - Think back about the two addicts
      - Christ's sacrifice bears cleansing for all the sin of the world (1 John 2: 2b)
        - This is incredible! Think of how much sin a single person commits, and then multiply that by 7.6 billion
      - To know Christ we are to keep his commandments (1 John 2: 4)
        - By not doing so, we do not know Christ

- This seems really harsh, but it makes a ton of sense
    - If you know Christ in his full conviction, would you render his sacrifice for you useless?
  - But by fulfilling his commandments, God's love is perfected in us (1 John 2: 5)
    - Through love, we are in God
    - Many of you know where this will eventually take us, but we're not quite there yet
- Jesus is our model to live by (1 John 2: 6)
  - God is the creator of the universe, and could have created the universe in such a way where Jesus's sacrifice was not required
    - There are a handful of reasons that could be argued as to why he didn't do this, but we will focus on one
    - By sending Jesus to die for us, we saw that man, as broken as we are, could overcome the temptations of the world and be perfected
      - We should look to this example, as Christ abided perfectly in God (through love)
        - If we want to do the same, we should become like Christ in every way
- The new commandment (1 John 2: 7-14)
  - We are to love our brothers, as doing so means we abide in light (1 John 2: 9-10)
    - This isn't a new commandment, just new phrasing (1 John 2: 7)
      - The entire law can be summarised in loving one another (Romans 13: 8-10)
        - Jews did not have the holy spirit inside them, they didn't have divine intervention inside of them in their daily actions
        - Instead, the law sufficed as a checklist of what they should be doing
        - Now for us, with the holy spirit inside of us, we have this pure love of Christ that can dictate our life
    - What does it mean to walk in darkness?
      - We read this before!
      - "We do not practice the truth" (1 John 1:6)
        - We aren't living out our faith, we are living a lie
      - By hating our brothers, we are "blinded" (1 John 2: 11)
        - We can't let hatred dictate our lives
        - We have to focus on God as to not lose sight on love (Colossians 3: 2)
        - You are blinded

- No light at all, utter darkness
  - Think about this, not having any light of Christ
  - You're either with or without God
- Christian encouragement (1 John 2: 12-14)
  - Remember, John is writing this letter to believers
    - His ultimate aim is to encourage them to good works
    - Being a Christian is hard work, but we are not to lose hope
    - Sometimes we have a lot to improve on, and this is super daunting
      - Sometimes you have to take things one step at a time
      - Remember how far you have come, the foundation that has been built
    - John really wants to hammer his points
      - He reiterates his first statements (to children, fathers, and young men) by elaborating his ideas
      - We should be encouraging each other as John did
        - It's so easy to get overwhelmed to the point of wanting to give up
        - God has given us each other in our walks of faith
        - This doesn't give us an excuse to sugarcoat life
          - We must hold each other accountable, while also celebrating in our spiritual victories and milestones
  - Do not love the world
    - In our time on earth, we have one responsibility that precedes all else: to serve and glorify God
      - This doesn't mean that we have to spend 100% of our time praying and singing
      - That said, if anything of the world gets in the way of our love for God, we need to put it into perspective
      - God needs to come first
        - If he doesn't, do you really believe in him?
    - God endures forever, while all else will fade (1 John 2: 17)
  - Warning concerning antichrists
    - What is an antichrist?
      - Someone who opposes Christ
      - John defines it as someone who denies Jesus (1 John 2: 22)
    - You cannot deny Jesus and have God abide in you (1 John 2: 23)

- On the flipside, anyone who confesses in Jesus has God abiding in them
  - Jesus is our gateway to God, he intercedes on our behalf
  - We need be wary of false teachers, lest they pull us away from our beliefs (1 John 2: 27)
    - Do not read this and think you never need to look to a spiritual mentor
      - But this means that above all, God needs to be our teacher
      - Anyone's teachings need to be checked against the word of God
        - We can't just blindly take what anyone says as truth
        - Why do you think I always give a scripture reference from some random spot in the Bible?
          - Every belief you have of Christianity should come from some place in the Bible, or at the very least be inspired by scripture
            - If not, you're just making up your own religion
        - It's our job to compile all of the teachings we receive, learn to apply them, check them for truth, and then prayerfully reflect that we may be transformed for the better through them
- 1 John 3
  - Children of God
    - We are purified through Christ (1 John 3: 3)
      - This is incredible news, as we inherently suck as humans
      - We are not purified yet, it is an ongoing process, and we won't completely know full purity til we are with Christ (1 John 3: 2)
        - This doesn't mean we can just give up and give in to sin
          - Keep reading, we are told that by practicing sin, we practice lawlessness (1 John 3: 4)
        - We are to continuously hope in him that we may be perfected for the day of judgement
        - Think of purity as a mathematical limit
          - On earth we only approach perfection, but it is unreachable
            - We still have a job to come as close as we can to Christ

- Jesus came to take away sin (1 John 3: 5)
  - Sin separates us from God, since there is no love in sin
    - Please see notes on “Faith, Hope, & Love” where this is goes into much more detail
  - We cannot know God and choose to keep sinning (1 John 3: 6)
    - Ouch
    - This is hard to swallow, because we all sin to an extent
      - This doesn’t mean we aren’t saved, it just means we have to step it up and look to our higher calling
    - We are to choose whether we want to practice righteousness or lawlessness (1 John 3: 7-8)
      - By choosing to sin, we practice lawlessness and choose to abide in the devil
        - This means by sinning, we make ourselves enemies of God
        - God doesn’t want his children to be his enemies, which is where his grace comes into play
          - That said, we cannot take his grace for granted
        - Jesus came to *destroy* the devil
          - Do we choose life or destruction?
          - Do your priorities lie in God or in the world?
    - If we know God, it is impossible for us to continue in sin (1 John 3: 9)
      - This doesn’t mean we physically can’t sin
      - Instead, it’s just a foolishly stupid thing to do
        - Why is it so dumb to sin?
          - Because if we actually know and believe in God, we believe that sin leads to nothing but destruction
          - If we don’t believe that in its entirety, maybe we don’t really understand who God it
  - We are marked as God’s people by our hearts ( 1 John 3: 10)

- If we do not do good works, how can we say we are God's children?
  - Jesus told us that we prove to be his disciples by the fruit we bear (John 15: 8)
  - If we don't love others, or serve God in our actions, what's the point???
- Are we really children of God?
  - Do we love as we were loved?
    - If not, why?
  - Do we actively try to seek God and flee from the sinful passions of the world?
  - Where do your priorities lie?
    - What are you struggling with?
  - We are called to love all and serve joyfully
    - Too many Christians overlook these two things, and I think it's time that it changes
- Love one another (1 John 3: 11-24)
  - What is love?
    - We've talked about it countless times!
    - Love is selfless perfection
      - There is no sin in love
      - Hatred tends to taint love
      - We fulfill the law through love
        - This is because love opposes sin
  - Jesus gave us the commandment to love each other (1 John 3: 11)
    - We have heard and talked about this before this before (1 John 2: 7-11)
      - Remember, it is a commandment of old, but made new
    - Worldly people might hate our love (1 John 3: 12-13)
      - Why?
        - If you're doing good things, it's hard to find fault with you
        - Jealousy for your works could be a factor
        - By looking at someone's purity, it's very easy to see your wickedness in comparison
      - This isn't a bad thing (John 15: 18-19)
        - This means we are not the world's possession, but inside Jesus's
    - We, as Christians *have* to love each other (1 John 3: 14)
      - John has mentioned this a lot, but keeps hammering it!
      - Not loving is as bad as murder (1 John 3: 15)
        - Clarification: a murder can still enter into heaven by the forgiveness of Jesus Christ

- This is because they are no longer a murder, their sins are forgiven
  - Moreover, all sins are on the same level
  - Likewise, if you have been unloving in the past, you aren't blocked out of heaven, so don't freak
    - But we must repent and seek forgiveness
    - Repenting doesn't mean halfheartedly giving an attempt but really picking up your cross and sacrificing where necessary
- We love because of the sacrifice of Jesus (1 John 3: 16)
  - We are called to follow after Christ
    - This means we should love to the extent Christ loved us
    - Though we aren't called to sacrifice ourselves for nothing, our love must be to that level where we would if necessary
      - Here's a fun thing, look at the chapter/verse numbers
        - Most all Christians know John 3: 16, how many live out 1 John 3: 16?
      - If you sacrifice yourself, you're dead
        - You have no earthly gain
        - This is agape love
        - Pure selflessness
      - Saying "I love you" isn't enough, we have to show it (1 John 3: 18)
- Abiding in God
  - If we follow God's commandments, he abides in us (1 John 3: 24)
    - As I previously stated, by following God's commandments, we will be loving servants of his name
    - This means that if we love perfectly, God will abide in us
      - This is a segway into the section after next one
      - It basically outright says this (1 John 4: 16)
  - We have this relationship established between doing what God tells us to and loving each other
    - Mathematically, if  $A=B$  and  $B=C$ , then  $A=C$



- This means that we know following God's commandments will lead us to being loving disciples
      - This was the purpose of the law!
- 1 John 4
  - Test the spirits (1 John 4: 1-6)
    - We can't listen blindly to everyone and copy their beliefs (1 John 4: 1)
      - We talked about this before, but this point is really important
    - We are stronger than the demons of the earth (1 John 4: 4-6)
      - This is not because of ourselves, but because of God
        - Alone, we may be weaker than the demons we face
        - We must rely on God's strength, we can't do life alone
  - God is love (1 John 4: 7-21)
    - I always think of this as the climax of the letter
      - Everything builds up to this point
      - We've been alluding a lot to being loving children, but here we really learn how to love
    - How can we love?
      - Humans are inherently evil, why does it make sense for us to be able to understand love?
      - Because God loved us (1 John 4: 19)
        - God chose to send us his son Jesus, that we might better understand love (1 John 4:10)
          - We learned to love by seeing the character of Christ and model after him
            - We base things off of stuff we know, how can we know love if we weren't showed it?
          - We further our ability to love through the bestowment of the Holy Spirit onto us
    - Why should we love?
      - It's objectively harder to choose love than it is to be selfish
      - By loving, God abides in us, and us in him (1 John 4: 16)
        - We may be perfect for judgment day by abiding in perfect love, as we will be faultless and sin-free (1 John 4:17)
      - We should be convicted to love, since God loved us to the extent he does (1 John 4: 11)
      - In order to know God, we have to love one another (1 John 4: 21)
    - Love is the entire point of the Christian religion
      - If there's one thing that we have to get right, it's this
- 1 John 5
  - Overcoming the world (1 John 5: 1-5)
    - As God's children, we obey joyfully (1 John 5: 3)

- We don't only follow God's commandments, but by his love in us, they are of no bother to us
  - We should be glad to serve God (Psalm 100: 2)
- It's easy to covet people that live by the world's standards, as we have far much more restrictions
  - We aren't just called to do good, but to have a desire to do good
  - Moreover, we are supposed to overcome this world, along with its desires (1 John 5: 4)
    - Only through our belief in Christ and our devotion to him do we truly overcome this world (1 John 5: 5)
- Testimony concerning the son of God (1 John 5: 6-12)
  - The testimony of God (1 John 5: 6-8)
    - Water
      - Baptism (Matthew 3: 16-17)
        - God literally claims Jesus as his son
        - This is the beginning of Jesus's many acts
        - What is baptism?
          - Symbolises your body dead and spirit reborn
    - Blood
      - Sacrifice (John 19: 30)
        - Jesus died on a cross for our sin
        - The climax of literally all his acts
        - This is often considered among the purest signs of his love for us
          - We know love comes from God
    - Spirit
      - God's plan on earth did not end with Jesus (Acts 1: 8)
      - We continue to testify in the name of Jesus, as we were called to do
  - God > man (1 John 5: 9)
    - We are to choose God and believe Jesus, as he is a living testimony to God
    - We've talked a lot about this, but this is another one of those big points John has been hammering into us!
- That you may know (1 John 5: 13 - 21)
  - We are to pray for repentance for not only ourselves, but also others (1 John 5: 16-17)
    - Woah woah woah.... Punishable by death?
      - What is this?
        - Lots of theories
        - Ultimately we do not know

- Even more so, we do not know if someone has committed this sin
    - We should pray for everyone, because it definitely doesn't hurt to do so
  - We have discernment from the holy spirit (1 John 5: 20)
    - By God's grace, we have guidance to steer away from sin (1 John 5: 19)
  - We are to stay away from idols (1 John 5: 21)
    - Mentioned as an afterthought
    - In reality, this is a huge reminder for us
    - In the history of Israel, this may have been their biggest fault
      - Even today, Idols take many forms
- Big Ideas
  - How to be a follower of God (Love)
    - Love each other
    - What does Christianity mean?
      - The character of Christ
      - The holy spirit
    - Warnings against false teachings
    - Sin is death
    - We were called out of darkness, into light
  - Seriously, love each other!

## 2 John

- 2 John 1
  - Greeting (2 John 1: 1-3)
    - Written to an "elect lady and her children" (2 John 1: 1)
      - Unknown who exactly this is
        - Could possibly be Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the rest of Jesus's blood family
        - Maybe a local congregation?
    - We see John say that, he and all of God's children love this woman (2 John 1: 1b-2)
      - Truth abides in them, which with our background from 1 John, we know that God's love abided in them
        - This is a subtle implication that anyone who knows the truth would have a conviction to love this woman, even if they don't personally know her
  - Walking in Truth and Love (2 John 1: 4-11)
    - Here, we get the sparknotes of 1 John
      - We should love each other (2 John 1: 5)
        - The way to go about doing this is by following God's commandments (2 John 1: 6)

- There are false teachers in the world, in which we should be cautious of (2 John 1: 7)
  - We must be careful, lest they pull us from the path of righteousness (2 John 1: 8)
- Since we have heard the news of Christ, we have an obligation to follow his teachings, otherwise we do not have him in us (2 John 1: 9)
  - Wait, so we don't greet people that don't follow Jesus's teachings? (2 John 1: 10-11)
    - In reality, we must fulfill our role as loving servants
    - However, we must safeguard our hearts against those who rebuke the teachings of Christ
    - This seems radical, but this isn't just talking about someone who isn't a Christian, this is talking about someone who rejects Christ entirely or incorrect teachings
      - Still, are we not called to be loving examples of Christ?
        - We are, but we can't let anyone pull us away from pursuing God

### 3 John

- 3 John 1
  - Greeting (3 John 1: 1-4)
    - This is a personal letter to a friend of John named Gaius (3 John 1: 1)
      - We should note the genuine intentions of John
        - He takes time to individually address his fellow brother in Christ
        - He has been praying specifically for Gaius's health and soul (3 John 1: 2)
        - His heart was overjoyed at Gaius's faith (3 John 1: 3)
        - In the coming section we will read John's support for his friend's struggles
        - This is how we are called to be with all our brothers and sisters in Christ
      - Example that John lived out his message
  - Support and Opposition (3 John 1: 5-12)
    - We should serve our fellow Christians, even if we don't personally know them (3 John 1: 5)
    - Giving support to our brothers and sisters strengthens their spirit (3 John 1: 8)

- We should rebuke those that are doing wrong, not through gossip, not by beating around the bush, but by showing (lovingly) that they are not acting according to Christ (3 John 1: 10)
- We should model our lives after those that do good, not those that live evilly (3 John 1: 11)
- Final Greetings (3 John 1: 13-15)
  - We are called to be intentional with everyone (3 John 1: 15)
    - We should greet everyone by name, not generically or impersonally
    - It makes a difference to someone to know that they are loved, and it is our job to love everyone