

Lessons in 1 John

1 John was written to followers of Jesus “so that you may know that you have eternal life.” As we study this short letter, we will discover profound yet highly practical teaching on the nature and person of Jesus and how we should respond to him in faith, obedience and love.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Live light

Scripture taken from *The Holy Bible: NIV*

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
1	That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.	1 John 1:1-4	<p>The Apostle John writes this letter to those remaining in the church to help them hold fast to the gospel as they'd received it, and to trust that it was in Christ that they truly had access to God and to eternal life. With that in mind, we see that our eternal life is based on the historic, reliable testimony of eye witnesses. Christianity is no esoteric, super-secret-exclusive club. It is 'life' based on the 'Word of life' who appeared in time and space and threw open the doors to heaven, into the heart of the triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. The result of trusting this, and being in relationship with each other, is that there is lasting, complete joy!</p> <p>Do you want to live a life of joy? How might the gospel of Jesus help you with that?</p>	Almighty God, Father, Son and Spirit, thank you that you have thrown open the door to your heart, to your very presence. Thank you that when we trust Jesus we are drawn deeply and eternally into your Life. Thank you that this is no pipe-dream, no weird, abstract, unbelievable philosophy or religion, but public, accessible, historic truth. Thank you that we can therefore have confidence that we will forever and for-always have this eternal life. Amen.

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
2	<p>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.</p>	1 John 1:5-2:2	<p>You really, truly are a mess. In fact, you are far worse off than you could possibly have imagined. And...you are far more loved than you could ever have imagined. We are sinners – God stakes his reputation on this verdict. Only the most massive effort of wilful blindness would cause us to deny this. But we also have the promise of complete, radical forgiveness. We are God’s dear children, whose sin has been dealt with through the death of our advocate, Messiah Jesus, on our behalf. Now there is nothing in God’s presence but complete, welcoming acceptance and love, the warm embrace of a Father who has given his all to save and perfect his beloved children.</p> <p>Are you ever tempted to think that you are “without sin”?</p>	<p>Heavenly Father, give me grace to confront and confess my sin with brutal honesty. Please forgive me. Please pour Your Holy Spirit into my life so that I might taste and see your extraordinary forgiveness, goodness and grace in my life today. Amen.</p>
3	<p>We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.</p>	1 John 2:3-6	<p>When it comes to claims to love God, actions speak louder than words. Christianity is not merely a set of ideas that we agree to, it is nothing less than a radical rearrangement of all parts of our lives – ideas, feelings, and behaviours. Loving others in the way of Jesus is the inevitable outcome of loving God. Failure to love others, whilst claiming to love God, would be like a Labor Party MP campaigning on behalf of the Liberal Party. What we do shows who we really are.</p> <p>How’s your love life today? Ask God to give you the vision and ability to live and love like Jesus today.</p>	<p>Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me. Now please work in my life so that today I can love everyone I meet the way you would, if you were meeting them in my place. Amen.</p>

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
4	<p>I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.</p> <p>I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.</p> <p>I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.</p> <p>I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father.</p> <p>I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.</p> <p>I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one</p>	1 John 2:12-14	<p>The local church is an inclusive, multi-generational family, where young and old are drawn together in Christ. We are drawn together on the basis of our forgiveness – we know God, his word lives in us and we have overcome the evil one. Think about this description of you, and your church family. When you are tempted to think that God has abandoned you, because of your sin or failings, try to remember this. When you think that evil is gaining the upper hand in your life, try to remember this.</p> <p>What sins in your life feel beyond forgiveness? Try to believe that when you confess them to God, he forgives you, fully and freely.</p>	Heavenly Father, thank you that young and old have a place in your family. Today, give me great assurance of my status as your child. Fill me with peace knowing that my sins are forgiven and that evil will not triumph in my life. Amen.
5	<p>Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.</p>	1 John 2:15-17	<p>Our desires matter a great deal to God. We are drawn to desire and love ‘the world’ – the physical reality apart from God. This is understandable, for we can see, taste, touch, smell, and feel this world, and it holds the promise of meeting our needs. We need to ask God to help us see that the relief and provision of this world has a use by date, whereas God’s presence and provision are eternal. Blessings that will last forever are found in God, not in the world that is passing away in front of you.</p> <p>What kinds of blessings would you like to enjoy forever? Does God want those same things for you?</p>	Eternal and loving father, help me to desire you above all else. By the power of your spirit set my heart on you, now and always. Amen.

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

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6	See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!	1 John 3:1	<p>Very many of our spiritual, emotional and relational struggles arise from the fact that we don't know, don't believe, or don't remember the truth expressed here. God loves you, not with a little love, but with an overwhelmingly great, massive, super-abundant love. This love is not bottled up in heaven somewhere, it has be lavished on you, poured out all over you, drenching you like a commuter caught in a tropical thunderstorm. At the heart of this love is the experience of being made one of God's children.</p> <p>What would it mean to live today as if this were true? What would change in you, and in the way you dealt with life?</p>	O God, pour your abundant, excessive, outrageous love into my heart and soul today. Fill me with your spirit so that I might know, deeply, in the core of my being, the truth that you have made me your child! Amen.
7	This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.	1 John 3:16-18	<p>God's plan is that you learn to live in the way of your big brother, Jesus. Your place in the family came at the cost of his life. Now it's time to learn that your life is about laying your life down in love and service of others. Christians don't just talk about love or 'like' things on social media. Start with loving your Christian family.</p> <p>Who in your church can you love in action this week? Ask those around you to what extent they experience Jesus-shaped love from you, and how you might change one thing to become better at this.</p>	Jesus, our hearts are full of gratitude at your love for us, and a deep sense of unworthiness as we consider our failures to love as you have loved us. Forgive us. Cleanse us. Give us the capacity and the grace to step out in new paths of love today. Amen.

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
8	This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.	1 John 3:19-24	<p>God doesn't leave us alone to figure out if we really have eternal life. Our assurance of salvation comes through the experience of having God himself, in the person of his spirit, live in us. As God lives in us, his life, obedience to his will, is lived out through us. We therefore believe in Jesus and love each other.</p> <p>Take a moment right now to ask God to fill you with His Spirit. Ask Him to give you an ongoing awareness of His life in and with you through the course of the rest of the day.</p>	Loving Father, pour your spirit afresh into my life. Fill me with your life, so that I can go out into your world today to trust Jesus and love everyone you bring across my path. Amen.
9	Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.	1 John 4:1-6	<p>Our world says that 'spirituality' is a great good. Against this backdrop we see here that in fact there is an absolute distinction between spiritual forces/realities. Any spiritual force, or spirituality, that does not acknowledge Jesus as the incarnate one, from God, is actually from Satan, not God. This is no reason, however, to be afraid of such spirits, though they are many and popular. Far from it. Being filled with the Holy Spirit gives us complete confidence in the face of all rival and competing spirits.</p> <p>Are you afraid of 'spiritualities' that contradict the gospel of Jesus? How does this passage help you?</p>	Great God, thank you that because we are filled with the Holy Spirit we are liberated from fear of the evil one, or any of his spirits. Give us great confidence in the power of your spirit and our authority as your children, indwelt and empowered by You. Amen.

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
10	This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.	1 John 4:9-11	<p>This is one of the greatest definitions of love in the bible. God's love is radically unconditional, it is centered on meeting our deepest needs and it is enormously costly. Read these verses again and insert your name in place of all the pronouns, e.g. "He sent his one and only Son into the world that [name] might live through him".</p> <p>Write this out and read it over to yourself daily for the rest of the week. How does this begin to change how you think of God and of yourself?</p>	Jesus, thank you that you came as an atoning sacrifice for my sins. Thanks that your love is so radical, so complete, so unconditional, so healing. Help me know and experience this more and more and more. Amen.
11	God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.	1 John 4:16-18	<p>What would your life be like if you were completely free of the fear of rejection by other people? Did you know that this way of living is indeed possible? You see, if we know, deeply and truly, the perfect love of God, then we know he will never reject us, that we are totally safe and secure in his acceptance, and that we can be progressively set free from worrying about what others think of us. The most important thing that happens is that we are set free to radically love others, without always worrying and wondering about what they think of me.</p> <p>Do you believe this is possible?</p>	Loving God, pour your perfect love into my heart in increasing measure and so set me free from fear and rejection, so that I may love those around me in radical and selfless ways, now and always. Amen.

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
12	This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.	1 John 5:2-4	<p>We love God by obeying Him. And his commands are not a burden for us. Isn't this unbelievable? Often we think of obedience to God as hard work, as a great burden, something imposed upon us that will rob us of life and joy. We feel this way because we don't really believe that God wants only what's best for us. In fact, obedience is no burden, it is the overflow and manifestation of our love for a God who first loved us, who has defeated sin for us, and who gives us his spirit so that we can live a Christ-shaped life. What a vision!</p> <p>Do you feel like obedience is a burden or a joy?</p>	<p>Almighty God, give me a vision of obedience to you as an expression of love and source of joy and blessing to me, and to those I care for. Give me the grace to obey you in all things, at all times and for all time. Amen.</p>
13	I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.	1 John 5:13-15	<p>We, as children of God, have confidence to come to our Heavenly Father at any time, with anything that matters to us, to talk it over with Him and to ask for His help. As his children we know his will, in the most important matters, so we aren't going to ask him for what we know is evil or harmful. We are going to run into his presence like little children asking their earthly parent for a hug. Confident. Loved. Heard.</p> <p>What do you want to ask your heavenly father for today?</p>	<p>O Great God, it is almost too wonderful to bear the thought that we can come into your presence and that you listen to us, and take our concerns with the utmost seriousness. Help us never to take that for granted. Amen.</p>

Lessons in 1 John (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
14	We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.	1 John 5:17-21	<p>Dear child, as a child of God, do not ever make anything more important in your life than God. Do not come to value the good gifts of God, money, love, health, status, religion, and family more than you value God. In the same way the solar system only holds together because of the massive mass of the sun at the centre holding everything in place, so your life will only hold together if God is at the centre, and everything else finds its rightful place around Him. May you live a life for all eternity with your sin-bearing, forgiveness-bringing, life-giving, evil-defeating Heavenly Father at the centre of all that matters to you.</p> <p>Is this vision of life appealing to you? How can you live it out today?</p>	Almighty God and loving Heavenly Father, forgive me for making secondary things ultimate. Help me to keep you as the ultimate reality in my life, now and forever and for always. Amen.