

BIBLE STUDY | SPRING 2024

# 1, 2, & 3 JOHN:

WALK IN THE LIGHT



**CHRIST**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHRISTPRES.ORG | © 2024 CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
WRITTEN BY MELANIE RAINER

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use This Book	4
<hr/>	
Introduction	5
<hr/>	
Week 1     1 John 1	6
<hr/>	
Week 2     1 John 2	10
<hr/>	
Week 3     1 John 3	14
<hr/>	
Week 4     1 John 4	18
<hr/>	
Week 5     1 John 5	22
<hr/>	
Week 6     2 and 3 John	26
<hr/>	
Resources Used in This Study	30

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We have three recommended ways for engaging with *1, 2, & 3 John: Walk In The Light* – **dig in**, **go deeper**, and **deeper still**.

## DIG IN

---

- If you are in a study group, join your group weekly to enjoy conversation, discuss the lesson, and talk through the Group Discussion Questions. If you are doing the study individually, work through the Group Discussion Questions at your own pace.
- Listen to or watch the teaching each week. The teaching is available on SoundCloud and YouTube. You can subscribe on those platforms or visit **[christpres.org/group-resources](http://christpres.org/group-resources)**, where you can find all the Bible study resources. You'll also receive a weekly email with a link to the teaching.

## GO DEEPER

---

- Read the weekly Scripture and go through the Focus, Observe, and Reflect questions to deepen your dive into God's Word.
- Feel free to complete questions throughout the week or all in one sitting. If you are in a group, your group may discuss some of these questions each week.
- Read the Application Summary.

## DEEPER STILL

---

- We recommend the following resource as a companion to your study, *The Letters of John* by Colin G. Kruse.

# 1, 2, & 3 JOHN: WALK IN THE LIGHT

## AN INTRODUCTION

The apostle John wrote five books in the New Testament: John, his three letters, and Revelation. This study will draw on the experiences John had with Jesus as we evaluate John's words for the early church as words for us, too.

In John 1, the first chapter of his gospel, he wrote:

*<sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:9-12)*

John's letters serve as something of a "now what" to those children of God: now that you are in the light, how do you walk in it? How does it change you? What does it mean to be a Christian in a world that offers wrongly ordered loves, priorities, and idols? John's letters bring us so much wisdom for daily living as followers of Jesus.

In this study, you will find a more reflective approach. Our church has recently completed a Bible study on John and a sermon series on the Upper Room Discourse (John 14-17). Now, we'll focus on John's letters, his words directly written to the church and to individual believers. These are letters that can have a tremendous impact on the way we live out our daily lives. Soaking in them and letting the Holy Spirit use these words to imprint on your heart can lead to a transformative way of moving through the world.

This Bible study will take a different movement: in lieu of "foundational questions," we'll do a focused reading of Scripture. How does that work? Read the passage. Then, read the passage out loud. Scan it again; what words or phrases stand out to you? Write them down. Hold your own experiences and feelings next to the phrases. Is this how your life plays out? Is this how you want it to be? Pick a verse or phrases from the passage to turn into a prayer. Let the Scriptures search you more than you search them.

Each week, note in the chart at the back of the book what characteristics John describes using the example made for Week 1/1 John 1. You'll compile a list of John's wisdom—what it looks like to walk in the light and what it looks like to not. This will be a tangible aid as you read through these books, one that you can return to again and again.

May the Lord bless you as you read 1, 2, and 3 John, and may you find yourself walking more closely with Jesus, the light of the world.



# WEEK ONE

## READ

1 JOHN 1

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— <sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## FOCUS

---

1. Ask the Lord to draw your heart and mind to the words he has for you in this text.
2. Read the passage again, out loud this time.
3. Scan the passage again. Write down or underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.

## OBSERVE

---

1. In verse 4, John writes "so that our joy may be complete." John often writes about joy. Look up the verses below and make notes. Who or what does John say will make our joy complete in each of these verses?
  - a. John 3:29
  - b. John 15:11
  - c. John 16:24
  - d. John 17:13
2. Verses 5–9 tell the whole gospel. Rewrite them here in your own words.

*"The effect of the light is not just to make people see, but to enable them to walk. Right conduct, not just clear vision, is the benefit which light bestows. ... We are not just to know the truth, but to do it, just as we are not only to see the light, but to walk in it."—John Stott*

3. Read John 3:19-21 and then 1 John 1:5-7 again. Reflect on John Stott's quotation. What is the relationship between knowing Jesus and following Jesus?

4. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

---

1. Now that you've read the Scripture, let the Scripture read you. What phrases, instructions, or ways of living from the passage are most familiar to you? Which ones would you like to grow in?

2. What types of fellowship does this passage call us to? How can you grow in those fellowships in your life?

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

The opening lines of John's first letter reveal that his message is rooted in his personal knowledge of Jesus, of following him, seeing him, hearing him, and touching him. Our faith is not afforded the same assurance, yet John tells us he writes to proclaim his assuredness to us. "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," he writes.

By believing, we enter the legacy of fellowship in Christ. We are one with each other and one in the Lord. The rest of John's first letter expands upon this thought: if we have fellowship with Christ and with each other, how then should we live? With the fullness of joy and an outpouring of love that mirrors, as best as we are able, the love Christ showed on the cross for us.

**Spend time praying the words of 1 John 1, asking that the Lord would draw you closer into fellowship with Jesus this week.**



# WEEK TWO

## READ

---

### 1 JOHN 2

<sup>1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. <sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

<sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake. <sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. <sup>14</sup> I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

<sup>18</sup> Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> 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 it might become plain that they all are not of us. <sup>20</sup> But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. <sup>21</sup> I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. <sup>24</sup> Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

<sup>26</sup> I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. <sup>27</sup> But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

<sup>28</sup> And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. <sup>29</sup> If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

---

---

---

---

---

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FOCUS

1. Ask the Lord to draw your heart and mind to the words he has for you in this text.
2. Read the passage again, out loud this time.
3. Scan the passage again. Write down or underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.

## OBSERVE

---

1. Verses 15-17 have a clear message for Christians, in John's time and today. How does John define "the world" contextually in verse 16?

a. Desires of \_\_\_\_\_

b. Desires of \_\_\_\_\_

c. Pride of \_\_\_\_\_

Now look up these other verses where John talks about "the world" and make notes of what he says:

*"God loves the world with the holy love of redemption. We are not to love it with the selfish love of participation. God loves the world in order to save sinners. We are not to love the world so as to share in their sin. God's love for the world inspires all at God's condescension. Our love for the world evokes disgust at our lust. John here is not countermending evangelism. He's saying, 'You've got to recognize you're in a conflict.'"—D.A. Carson*

2. How have you felt this "conflict," as D.A. Carson calls it, between the "holy love of redemption" and the "selfish love of participation" when it comes to the world?

3. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

---

1. Now that you've read the Scripture, let the Scripture read you. What phrases, instructions, or ways of living from the passage are most familiar to you? Which ones would you like to grow in?

2. Read John 15:1-11. How does knowing that John heard these words spoken by Jesus affect the way you understand 1 John 2? What similarities do you see?

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world,” and in John’s first letter, he writes, “Do not love the world or the things of the world.” Those may be difficult to reconcile at first blush, yet the truth is that the supremacy of God’s love is the point here. Loving God does not mean rejecting his creation or created people; rather, it means having a singular focus on God that renders the idols of the world a low din rather than a compelling roar. There is a temptation to read a passage like this and then want to radically change our lives, eschewing material pleasures and then feeling guilty for the role they inevitably play in our lives. The question then is, if loving God *first* is the objective of our Christian life, how can the world and both its legitimate demands and idolatrous temptations have a rightly ordered place in our lives? As D.A. Carson wrote, we have to recognize that we are “in a conflict.” In John 15, we read of Jesus being the vine we abide in; by abiding in him, we are equipped to bear good fruit. When we think of the two options John presents in his letter—abiding in Christ or abiding in the world—choosing one in which to draw nutrients in order to flourish and bear fruit—we are reminded that everything we need is found in Jesus.

**Spend time praying the words of 1 John 2, asking the Lord to help you love him and seek his glory first in all things.**

## READ

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FOCUS

1. Ask the Lord to draw your heart and mind to the words he has for you in this text.
2. Read the passage again, out loud this time.
3. Scan the passage again. Write down or underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.

## OBSERVE

---

1. John writes extensively in this chapter about sin and the relationship children of God should have with sin. How does the phrase “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him” sit with you? What questions does it bring up?

*“John is not suggesting that the child of God will not commit a single act of sin. Instead, John is describing a way of life, a character, a prevailing lifestyle.”—Daniel Akin*

2. In verse 10, what are the two evidences John gives of being a child of God?
3. Observe the roles given to each person of the Trinity in verses 21-24. Write them out below and look up the additional verses below.
  - a. Father (1 John 5:2, Romans 8:32-34)
  - b. Son (Isaiah 50:10, John 1:12, John 3:18)
  - c. Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16, Acts 5:32, Acts 15:8)
4. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

---

1. Now that you’ve read the Scripture, let the Scripture read you. What phrases, instructions, or ways of living from the passage are most familiar to you? Which ones would you like to grow in?



2. Think back to 1 John 2 and the conflict of abiding in God versus abiding in the world. How does that encouragement continue in this chapter regarding practicing righteousness or practicing sinfulness? What connections do you see?

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

John writes in this chapter about being a child of God. Because of God's great love for us, we can be adopted into his family and called his child (v. 1-2). As God's children, we should be known by two things: our fleeing from sin (v. 6, 10) and loving others (v. 10, 16, 23). Looking back to 1 John 2, John encourages his readers to abide in God and reject the world; in this chapter, he reminds us that we are marked as Christians by pursuing righteousness over sin.

John continues to present a clear picture of what it means to walk in the light—to live as a follower of Jesus. John wrote in a time when the church in Ephesus faced the infiltration of false teachers who underemphasized the cost of sin; John saw Jesus die to carry the weight of sin and assure our victory over death (the punishment of sin). No wonder John's warnings about sin strike so strongly.

**Spend time praying the words of 1 John 3, asking the Lord to help you pursue righteousness over sinfulness.**

## WEEK FOUR

## READ

# 1 JOHN 4

<sup>1</sup> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup> By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FOCUS

2. Read John 1:14-18. What connections do you see between John's reflections about seeing God in Jesus and seeing God in Jesus' followers?
3. What do you think it means that "perfect love casts out fear"? Use the context in the verses surrounding verse 18. Have you heard this verse used out of context in the past? If so, what do you think John is actually saying here?
4. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

1. Now that you've read the Scripture, let the Scripture read you. What phrases, instructions, or ways of living from the passage are most familiar to you? Which ones would you like to grow in?
2. Reflect on 1 John 4:13-16. Do you believe these words? Pray that the Lord would make them more true to you every day.

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

The love that John describes in his letter, particularly in chapter 4, is not mere emotional affection. It is love that comes from God, made manifest in us in the coming of Jesus and his death for our sin, love that casts out all fear of punishment and death, and love that we receive freely. John wrote in the first chapter of his gospel, as well as in this chapter, that “no one has seen God,” but he explains how God can be seen through the love of believers for each other. In his commentary on 1 John, Ray Van Neste writes, “John makes it clear that by ‘love’ he does not mean a vaguely positive sentiment by defining love by the work of Christ. God’s love was ‘made manifest’ by sending ‘his Son’ that we might live and by the death of Jesus that we might have the “propitiation for our sins . . . This is love, sacrificing oneself for the ultimate good of another. Christian love is not excusing sin or doing whatever another person wants, but Christian love is fundamentally cross-shaped, doing for another what most helps them as God would see it.”

God’s love for us is so great that he provided a way through our sin; it’s not a dismissal of sin, but rather Jesus owning the very real punishment for it. In this provision we see love transcending emotion. It is a love that formed the very foundations of the world—love that died for us—and love that is making all things new.

**Spend time praying the words of 1 John 4, asking God to help you know his love more deeply.**

## READ

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal green ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FOCUS

1. Ask the Lord to draw your heart and mind to the words he has for you in this text.
2. Read the passage again, out loud this time.
3. Scan the passage again. Write down or underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.



## OBSERVE

---

<sup>12</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. <sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:12-17).

1. In the John 14 passage above, Jesus says these words to John and the other disciples in the upper room the night he was betrayed. How does knowing that John heard these words from Jesus impact how you read 1 John 5:13-15? What confidence does the Holy Spirit give to believers regarding following Christ’s commandments?
2. Chapter 5 verses 19–20 expand on what John says in 1 John 2:15-17. Summarize what you’ve learned through 1 John about how Christians should relate to the world.
3. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

---

1. Now that you’ve read the Scripture, let the Scripture read you. What phrases, instructions, or ways of living from the passage are most familiar to you? Which ones would you like to grow in?

2. What has the Lord shown you through reading 1 John? What key themes have stuck out to you about what it means to walk in the light of Christ?

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

John closes his first letter by summarizing and expanding upon the key themes in the first four chapters: the importance of Christian love, the tension Christians face between life in Christ and life in the world, and the confidence we have before God the Father through the righteousness of the Son and the assurance of the Spirit. This one short letter contains the Gospel in just five chapters: the world is dark and sinful, and we are dark and sinful, yet when we believe Christ Jesus is the Son of God, we are no longer subject to the judgment of God, but rather we are adopted as sons and daughters. The gospel transforms not only our standing before the Lord but also how we engage with the world and how we live our lives. Love becomes the simple, prevailing theme of our days: we experience the greatest love possible because God is love, and we are compelled to love others out of our overflowing cups. When we don't have to worry about pleasing the world or earning our place in it, think about what possibilities exist for the cause of love, the cause of Jesus! In his book, *Freedom of Simplicity*, Richard Foster says this: "This inner heart simplicity is discovered in having the crucified Christ as the unifying force of all our affections and aspirations." John encourages us to live a simple life with Jesus at the center. How can you pursue that life?

**Spend time praying the words of 1 John 5, asking God to help you know his love for you and to share his love with the world.**

# WEEK SIX

## 2 AND 3 JOHN

### READ

---

Note: Why read two books of the Bible in one week? Both 2 and 3 John are very short and share similar themes.

*“The second and third letters of John are the shortest documents of the New Testament—shorter even than the letter to Philemon and the letter of Jude, which are the only other New Testament letters consisting of but one chapter. Each of John’s second and third letters contains less than 300 Greek words and was no doubt written on a single sheet of papyrus.”—John Stott*

### 2 JOHN

<sup>1</sup> The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, <sup>2</sup> because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

<sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son, in truth and love.

<sup>4</sup> I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. <sup>5</sup> And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. <sup>6</sup> And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. <sup>7</sup> For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. <sup>8</sup> Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. <sup>9</sup> Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

<sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, <sup>11</sup> for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

<sup>12</sup> Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>13</sup> The children of your elect sister greet you.

### 3 JOHN

<sup>1</sup> The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. <sup>3</sup> For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

<sup>5</sup> Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, <sup>6</sup> who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup> For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

<sup>9</sup> I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

<sup>10</sup> So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

<sup>12</sup> Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

<sup>13</sup> I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. <sup>14</sup> I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

<sup>15</sup> Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FOCUS

---

1. Ask the Lord to draw your heart and mind to the words he has for you in this text.
2. Read the passage again, out loud this time.
3. Scan the passage again. Write down or underline the words or phrases that stand out to you.

## OBSERVE

---

1. The words “truth” and “joy” appear frequently in the beginning of John’s letters. Read 1 John 1:1-4, 2 John 1-4, and 3 John 1-4. What is the relationship between truth and joy for Christians? Why do you think John emphasizes these two things?
2. Both 2 John and 3 John offer caution against false teachers. Compare and contrast the false teachers (the deceiver/antichrist in 2 John and Diotrephes in 3 John) and John’s warnings.
3. Fill in the characteristics chart on page 31 with the distinctions John gives between Christians and non-believers.

## REFLECT

---

*“Why did John and all other Christians love the members of this church? Because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us for ever. If we are Christians, we are to love our neighbours and even our enemies; but we are bound to our fellow Christians by the special bond of truth. Truth is the ground of reciprocal Christian love.”—John Stott*

1. Reflect on John Stott’s quotation above in light of 2 John 1-4 and 3 John 1-4. How does this description of Christian love line up with your experience in the church or with other Christians? Read Jesus’ words in John 13:35.

2. Throughout his letters, John emphasizes the importance of following Christ's commandments. Why do you think that is, and how does that emphasis help with his overarching message about what it means to live as a Christian?

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

---

Both 2 and 3 John offer encouragement to the early church and its leaders to stay focused on the truth, to love each other, and to stand against false teachers. At many points, John echoes words he heard from Jesus during the Upper Room Discourse. John's consistency of message throughout his letters (1, 2, and 3), particularly in how they match the words of Jesus, reminds us that John is writing not as someone who merely studied Jesus but as someone who knew him. Jesus left an indelible mark on John, who encourages us to abide in the truth of Jesus and to love one another, a perfect way to summarize our life as Christians.

**Spend time praying the words of 2 and 3 John, seeking the help of the Holy Spirit as you follow Jesus every day.**

## RESOURCES USED FOR THIS STUDY

John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/part-2-1-john-2-3-27/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/1-john/#section-18>

Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 143.

CSB Study Bible: Notes, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers)



## **CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANS**

Have fellowship with him (1 Jn 1:6)

Walk in the light (1 Jn 1:7)

Have fellowship with other Christians (1 Jn 1:7)

Blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin (1 Jn 1:7)

Confess sin and are forgiven (1 Jn 1:9)

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-BELIEVERS**

Walk in darkness, lie, do not practice truth (1 Jn 1:6)