



Dear Ladies,

Welcome to the Calvary Women Bible Study! It's always a joy to start a new study in the Fall with new ladies and those returning as well. We are thrilled to be finishing the New Testament this year with our study in 1&2 Peter, 1,2&3 John and Jude. This year's study is entitled TRUTH. In this study, we will learn how we are to Walk in Truth, be Established in Truth, and Fight for Truth. Truth is *"being in accord with fact or reality"*. Reality is that Jesus is Truth. He said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Me." One pastor said every follower of Jesus Christ can live every moment of every day with hope if they remember three important truths: 1. This earth is not our home. 2. God uses adversity in this life to strengthen our faith. 3. The end is near. If we remember these three simple truths and establish our hearts and lives in the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, we will walk like Him, be established like Him, and fight like Him! May the Lord help us this year to glean from the truth that we may become like the Truth!

Love,

*Michelle*

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you. 2 Peter 1:12*

BUT AS

He who called you

IS HOLY

YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL <sup>OF</sup> YOUR CONDUCT  
BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN

Be Holy

FOR

I AM

HOLY

1 Peter 1:15-16



## Lesson 1 – 1 Peter 1:1–25

This epistle was written to first-century Christians dispersed throughout the northern part of what is now modern Turkey, just prior to the outbreak of persecution from the infamous and terrible Emperor Nero, around A.D. 64. It was written from Babylon (or Rome—5:13) to an audience of both Jewish and Gentile believers who were undergoing a time of social, political, and personal persecution. The letter emphasizes the reality of suffering in the lives of all Christians, with the focus being on the challenge to stand firm and persevere in all circumstances of life.

Peter—also known as Simon—was a fisherman and follower of John the Baptist, who was led to the Lord Jesus by his brother Andrew. Known for being short-tempered and impulsive, he was singled out along with James and John for in-depth training by the Lord. Jesus changed his name to *Cephas*, an Aramaic word for *Petros* in the Greek, meaning a “stone” or a “rock.” Jesus called him *Peter* to signify the rock-like character that would distinguish his life, making him one of the founders of the early Christian church. He would emerge after Pentecost as the leading spokesperson for the disciples and was used mightily by the Lord to spread the Good News. History records that when he was sentenced to be crucified, Peter requested that he be hung upside down on the cross, considering himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. He died in Rome around A.D. 68, during the persecution by Emperor Nero.

Have you ever been the target of someone else’s unkind remarks? Do you know firsthand what it’s like to be persecuted for your faith? If so, this letter is for you. You may not have faced an ego-maniacal emperor, but you have felt the pain of ridicule, harassment, and conflict bearing down on you. Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers in whatever trials they may be facing. For Peter’s original audience as well as today’s, the recurring themes of his letter are the hope, security, peace and steadfastness that are ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1:15–16*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

## **FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 1:1-2**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 1:1–25, focusing on verses 1-2.

Peter begins his introduction with his title: “an ***apostle*** of Jesus Christ . . .” (v.1). It was not possible for a man to appoint himself to be an apostle. It was a divine calling, a commission by God to represent Christ. The job responsibility for this important office was unique and limited to the few hand-selected men who were called to fill it.

1. Using the resources you have on hand, look up the word *apostle* and write a definition for it.

The New Testament has much to say about the office of an *apostle*. Look up the following verses and briefly note what is revealed.

a. Matthew 10:1–4 and 5–8

b. Matthew 28:16–20

c. Acts 1:22; 10:39–43

d. Ephesians 3:4–5

e. At approximately what point in His earthly ministry did Jesus give the title *Apostle* to His disciples? See Luke 6:12–16.

The word *apostle* literally means *one sent out on a mission*, such as an ambassador or envoy. The office carried with it the responsibility and authority to set up and supervise the church and to initiate discipline when necessary. Peter was sent out by none less than his Master and Lord, giving him the authority and power of Almighty God behind him. If you mention the Apostle Peter and most of us immediately think of a strong, impetuous fisherman who had a habit of putting his foot in his mouth by saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Even those who don't know much about the man recall that Peter denied the Lord Jesus three times. His life presents a vivid illustration of how we fail as human beings, but also how we can succeed and be victorious through the new nature that is ours in Christ. From his initial call by Jesus, to the Holy Spirit's empowering at Pentecost, Peter experienced the unusual, such as what it was like to walk on water. He was a witness at the Transfiguration, recognizing and testifying to Christ's deity. He was rebuked by his Lord and even denied Him, but he also repented and was restored, witnessing the Lord's ascension to heaven.

Peter's life is a lesson in contrasts and his life stands as an example of what the Lord can do with a person determined to become all that God wants him to be!

2. Personal: Think about it . . . would *you* be willing to be remembered for your failures rather than your successes if your life served as an example to others? Please explain.

3. To whom is Peter writing? How does he describe them? vv. 1–2

These are "God's elect" but they were also strangers. In his letter, Peter refers to them as *pilgrims* (1:1), and sojourners or tourists (2:11), people who were away from their homes. The terms he uses imply a temporary separation. These people were foreigners scattered abroad, but they belonged to God and would remain His while living in a world that was not their home.

4. Put yourself in the shoes of a tourist in a foreign land. What are a few of the things you would most be concerned about?

5. Now contrast that line of thought with that of being a pilgrim believer in this world. Currently, how tight would you label your grip and what is your world view? (Circle one.)
- a. **Tight grip:** I have eagerly sought the possessions, pleasures, and position this world has to offer me and I feel very much at home in it.
  - b. **Moderate grip** - I am preoccupied with the busyness of daily life but wanting to find God's place of peace and rest.
  - c. **Loose grip** - The longer I walk with Christ I feel more out of place, like a foreigner who is just passing through this world.
  - d. Personal: Please explain your answer in your own words . . .

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are God's elect; your citizenship has been transferred from this world to heaven! You have been chosen *according to the foreknowledge of the Father; through the sanctifying work of the Spirit; for obedience to Jesus Christ by the sprinkling of His blood*" (v. 2). Will you take a moment now and thank Him?

## **SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 1:3-7**

Read 1 Peter 1:3–12 for review.

In verses 3–12, Peter links salvation to what he refers as a "living hope" for every believer. The hope Peter has in mind is based on the confident expectation of life after death that is bestowed upon Christians.

1. Who has gifted believers with this inheritance and how? Where is it kept? vv. 3–4

The word *kept* means *to guard or reserve in place*. The tense of the verb indicates that this inheritance already exists; it continues to be there. The trials we experience in this life cannot undermine or diminish the inheritance kept for us in the next one.

2. Does being *kept (shielded)* by God's power mean that His children will not have to go through pain or difficulty? What does it mean? v. 5

3. Based on this hope, what kind of response are we believers to have? vv. 6–7

Remember, Peter wrote this letter to people who were undergoing tremendous opposition. Some of what they endured included being wrapped in freshly slaughtered animal skins and fed to wild animals. Others were dipped in hot tar or pitch and set on fire as human torches that lit up Nero's gardens at night. As horrific as these things are, Peter states that the suffering here upon the earth lasts only "a little while" in light of our inheritance, which lasts for eternity.

4. What is one of the main reasons for trials? How is the believer's faith tested? v. 7

The purification process for metal is always fire. When heated to a high temperature, the metal melts and the impurities rise to the surface and are skimmed off, resulting in a pure reflection on the surface.

a. What is the lesson here for the believer as it pertains to the transforming process of sanctification? Whose reflection becomes more obvious over time?

b. Personal: Can you share a time recently when your faith was put through the fire? What did you learn about your faith and how did it grow?

c. What similar thread do you find in James 1:2–4 that compares to Peter's words of encouragement here in vv. 6–7?

### THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 1:8-12

Peter's focus now shifts from the difficulties of this present life to the day of Christ's return. His concern is that of our testimony: the fact that our faith, having been tested and proved genuine, will mean praise, honor, and glory when Jesus Christ is revealed. Choosing to believe in Him though we've not seen Him results in the joy that comes not from our circumstances but from our relationship with Him.

1. What is the end of our faith? v. 9

a. Who is it that longed to know about God's salvation? v. 10

b. In their search to know more, what did they discover about Christ? v. 11

c. It was revealed that their service was not for themselves; who were they serving? v. 12

It's as if Peter asks, *"Do you realize how fortunate you are? Angels would have given anything to be in on this!"* You, dear believer, are a *full heir* to the message of hope the prophets preached thousands of years ago. Think about it: the *weakest* Christian today is capable through the Holy Spirit of understanding more than the greatest prophets who ever lived and who predicted Christ would come!

2. Personal: In your search to know more this week, what new discovery have you made about your salvation?

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are one of God's elect and your citizenship has been transferred from this world to heaven. Peter states (v. 2) that all three persons of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit—are working together to assure you of your salvation—to give you this *living hope*. If you have not yet prayed to receive Jesus Christ into your heart but would like to, just bow and pray the following to Him: *"Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner in need of Your grace and mercy today. I ask for Your forgiveness and cleansing and for You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Thank you for coming to live inside my heart and that I am born again! In Your name I pray. Amen."*



#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 1:13-25**

Read 1 Peter 1:13–25 for review.

The word “therefore” (v.13) is the pivotal bridge between what Peter has just stated regarding our *living hope* and the time in the not-too-distant future when Jesus Christ returns and we, as believers, enter into the reality of that hope. In the remainder of the chapter, Peter explains what is most important and what we are to be occupied with until the day of the Lord’s return.

1. Use the following exercise to help you keep the main thing the main thing, reminding you of what matters most. In a sentence or two, write an explanation as to how you are doing with each one (a brief description is given to you). Be prepared to share with your group.
  - a. **Be prepared** in your mind (*gird up the loins of your mind*); be alert and ready for action. v. 13
  - b. **Be self-controlled** (*sober*); think and act straight. v. 13
  - c. **Be hopeful** to the end (*rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you*); look forward to the special blessings that are yours. v. 13
  - d. **Be obedient** children (*not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance*); don’t let our lives be controlled by your desires. v. 14
  - e. **Be holy** in all your behavior and manner of conversation (*in all your conduct*). v. 15
  - f. **Be holy, for I am holy**; so motivated because He is holy. v. 16
2. Start taking your spiritual character development as seriously as God takes it! What should be your motive for living a holy life as you await His return? v. 17

- a. What realization should affect your perspective and make you *want* to change your behavior? vv. 18–19
  - b. Understand that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was foreordained prior to creation. For whose sake was it planned and made known? v. 20 (Share your thoughts.)
3. One of the best ways to demonstrate a love for God and practice a walk of holiness is to see that *we love one another fervently with a pure heart* (v. 22).

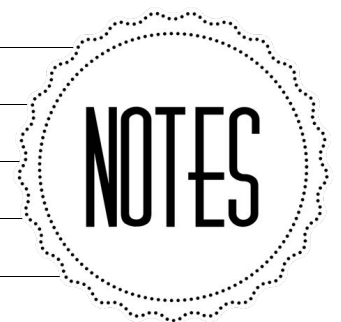
Personal: On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being best, how are *you* doing?

The instrument that brought about the new birth is the Word of God. Peter would have us remember two aspects about it: (1) it is living; (2) it is enduring.

- a. *Living* suggests the power of the Word to do what?
- b. *Enduring* reinforces the power of the Word to do what?

Verses 23–25 are closely linked to verses 3–4. The living, enduring Word is the agent God uses to give you a living hope and an imperishable inheritance. Cherish this gift and let it motivate you to holiness!

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?





like newborn  
babies  
CRAVE SPIRITUAL MILK  
SO THAT BY IT

you may  
grow

up in your salvation,  
NOW THAT YOU HAVE TASTED <sup>THAT</sup>  
the Lord is  
Good.



## Lesson 2 – 1 Peter 2:1–25

In the closing verses of chapter one, Peter’s audience is left with the understanding that our hope and inheritance are made real through God’s living, enduring Word. Chapter two is all about growing spiritually, and it is here that we make the discovery that the process begins and continues through the daily application of God’s Word. The moment a person accepts Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, they are reborn into the family of God as a life-long member of His master building program. As the process continues, the Holy Spirit is able to build believers into a spiritual house. Once the construction nears completion, the improvements and finishing touches become visible to others. Likewise, the believer’s attitudes and actions are revealed for the better as we grow closer to completion and receiving our eternal inheritance.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” 1 Peter 2:2–3 (NIV)*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 2:1-3**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 2:1–25.

The opening of chapter two immediately draws the reader’s attention back to chapter one by Peter’s use of the word “*therefore*” (v.1). Right away it connects the concept of our rebirth through God’s Word (1:23) with the evidence of our new birth being lived out in daily life. Peter’s use of the term “newborn babies” is not a reference to his readers being new Christians, but is rather an exhortation to all believers to *desire* or *crave long* the spiritual nourishment of God’s Word in the same way a baby longs for milk in order to be satisfied and grow.

1. Peter lists five sins in verse 1 that we must be rid of before we can grow unhindered in the Christian life. List them in the space below.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

To *rid* ourselves can also mean to “put off” or “put away.” The same term is used in other places in the New Testament to indicate the decisive act of removing or taking off the believer’s former sinful life.

2. What do you learn about this *putting off* from the following?

a. Romans 13:11–14

b. Colossians 3:6–10

c. Why is this process so important to spiritual growth? See Ephesians 4:14–15.

d. What important familiar warning is there in James 1:21–22?

3. Using the resources you have on hand, look up each of the five sins Peter lists in verse 1 and write down why it will hinder *your* spiritual growth as a Christian. Be specific in your answers. (Note: the first two, *malice* and *deceit* are general in nature. The last three, *hypocrisy*, *envy*, and *slander*, flow out of the first two.)

a. *Malice will hinder my spiritual growth because*

b. *Deceit will hinder my spiritual growth because*

c. *Hypocrisy will hinder my spiritual growth because*

- d. *Envy will hinder my spiritual growth because*
  - e. *Slander will hinder my spiritual growth because*
  - f. Which, if any, of these sins is evident in your life right now? (Be honest with yourself; God already knows the answer.)
4. Personal: What does *your* spiritual diet consist of? Are you malnourished because you're prone to skip meals in the Word? Are you perhaps "picky choosy," jumping from one section of the Bible that you like without perhaps taking in the whole counsel of God and savoring how it's nourishing you? As a child of God, it's not only a pleasure but a privilege to taste the Goodness of God's Word for yourself. To taste His goodness is to want more of His goodness. It means you will no longer be satisfied with anything less than God's best! How's your spiritual diet? Please share your thoughts.

## **SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 2:4-8**

Read 1 Peter 2:4–8 for review.

Christians grow up together—as *living stones*—having been built upon the foundation of Christ, the Cornerstone. Each time a new believer is admitted into God's family, a new living stone is added to the building. Together, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, we grow into the temple of God.

In order to emphasize the importance of Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of the church and the believer's life, Peter wove together two portions of Old Testament prophecy from the books of Isaiah and Psalms.

1. What do you discover about the Lord Jesus from the verses Peter quoted?
  - a. v. 6: Isaiah 28:16 –
  - b. vv. 7–8: Isaiah 8:14 and Psalm 118:22 –

The structure and design of a building rest upon the foundation or cornerstone, with the capstone being the topmost piece or finishing touch. Peter's point is that from its inception to its completion, the Church, which consists of these *living stones* is built upon THE Living Stone: "*For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 3:11 NLT). He is both the *cornerstone* upon which it rests and the *capstone*—the point up to which it grows. He is the beginning and the end!

2. Not everyone chooses to "accept" the cornerstone God put in place. Finish the following . . .

a. v. 6: *Whoever believes in Him* \_\_\_\_\_

b. v. 7: *To you who believe* \_\_\_\_\_

The "builders" referred to in verse 7 are those who willfully choose to reject Christ. What does Peter say about them?

c. vv. 7–8: *To those who are disobedient (do not believe)* \_\_\_\_\_

Despite their rejection of God's *chief cornerstone*, Jesus was given the preeminent position in the Church. When you come to Christ, you become part of a building—the Church. You also become part of a holy priesthood. As such, you have the privilege of gaining direct access to God anytime, anywhere. You also have the great honor of serving Him by bringing others to Him.

3. In this privileged position, what are you called to do? v. 5

In the Old Testament, the position of *priest* meant having an attitude of repentance, remaining pure, and continually offering prayers of supplication and thanksgiving to God. The New Testament goes somewhat further in its practical application to all believers.

4. In Romans 12:1–2, we find the ways we can offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. What are they?

Although we will never achieve perfection this side of heaven, the standard for every believer is a walk of holiness. Remember, as a *priest*, you are set apart by God for His use. Your life's purpose is to proclaim His praises. Your life's goal is that when people look at *you*, they see and hear Jesus!



### **THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 2:9-12**

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12 for review.

1. In verses 9–10, Peter specifically details the value that God places on you. How does Peter describe your relationship with God? Put these in your own words.
  - a. When God called you out of darkness, from whose power were you released? See Acts 26:18
  - b. Contrast who you were *before* with who you are *now*. What precious gift has God given you? v. 10
2. Peter refers to believers as “*sojourners*” and “*pilgrims*” in verse 11? (Remember to whom he was writing.) As one of today’s believers in a foreign land (a world to which you do not belong), from what must you abstain? Why?
  - a. What kind of example are you to be? Why?

Peter is referring in these verses about the quality of life that will cause non-believers to stand up and take notice! He isn’t speaking of a one-time encounter with another person, but rather the process of being watched over a long period of time. He is emphasizing that we are to model the kind of behavior that is free of criticism or offense until the day of the Lord’s return.

- b. Personal: Can you say that you are living up to your high calling? Yes or no? If not, has the Holy Spirit revealed something specific that is hindering you from doing so?

## **FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 2:13-25**

Read 1 Peter 2:13–25 for review.

Relationships can be difficult and sometimes very demanding, offering us the opportunity to really appreciate the difference God's grace has made in our own lives. The remainder of chapter two deals with how Christians are to relate to one another and how we are to respond to those that don't know Christ. In the final analysis, no matter what our circumstances may be at any given moment, we believers are God's instruments to proclaim to the world who He is and what He's done on our behalf. In other words, our lives should be a continual living testimony of His character and love.

In verses 13–25, Peter begins to illustrate the testimony of the life that is fully submitted to God. Although he wanted Christians to submit willingly, a closer look reveals that Peter's words are not presented as an option but rather a command. In every area, we are called to follow in *His steps*!

The remainder of the chapter breaks nicely into three sections, each dealing with a different aspect of how the believer should respond to authority.

### ***Submission to government authorities*** (vv. 13–17)

1. Think about it: who are some of those in authority over your life? Name them below.
  - a. For whose sake are you asked to submit to these authorities?
2. Personal: What does your submission look like in practical everyday life. Why does God want you to submit in this way? vv. 15–16

The spiritual freedom you enjoy as a Christian includes freedom from sin's rule, freedom from guilt because you are forgiven, and freedom from thinking you have to earn God's favor. In areas where the Word of God gives no guidance, you are free to make your choices responsibly. In all things you have the freedom to do—not what you *want*—but what you *ought*. This should be your code of conduct in everyday life.

3. In verse 17, Peter says every believer is to *fear God, love the brethren, and respect everyone* e/se. In order to live up to this calling, you will need to exhibit Christ's example of humility. Read through Philippians 2:3–8, and share what you discover about the Lord's example that ministers to you today.

### ***Submission as an employee-servant*** (v. 18)

Peter does not attempt to condone slavery, but to encourage those who were suffering in a society that permitted it. Believers who were servants (slaves) were not free from serving their masters, but were free from the slavery of sin. Whether their employer was a Christian or non-believer, they were to be respectful and responsible in their behavior.

- a. What should a believer's heart-attitude be? Who are they ultimately serving? See Colossians 3:22–24.
- b. Personal: Have *you* ever worked for a harsh employer? How did it affect you? How did God's grace enable you?

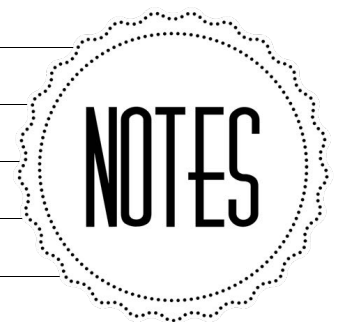
### ***Submission to unjust authorities*** (vv.19–25)

The reality of life is—believers will suffer in this world. Sometimes we are even called to suffer at unjust hands for the greater glory of God and for our own maturity (v. 21).

- a. Peter isn't saying that it's commendable to endure punishment that is deserved; to what kind of suffering does he refer?

- b. What does Peter point to in these verses about Christ's own suffering?
  
- c. Personal: How does possessing an understanding of who/what you once were help to motivate you to adopt Christ's example?
  
- d. Take a moment to contemplate verse 25 in light of Psalm 23. How does the assurance that Christ is *your* Shepherd—*your* Overseer—encourage you today?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?



"wives, likewise, be  
submissive to your own  
husbands, that even if  
some do not obey the  
word"

And  
WITHOUT A  
WORD

May be won  
BY THE CONDUCT OF  
their wives."



### Lesson 3 – 1 Peter 3:1-22

Peter began his letter by telling believers to live a life of holiness that is based upon the enduring Word of God, because at the end of that life we will see Him for who He is and receive what even angels desire to look into: the salvation of our souls! In chapter two he encouraged believers to realize that we are *chosen*, meaning we should conduct ourselves as people of God in this foreign world. As such, we are to live in a way that declares the praises of God within our relationships, both inside and outside of the church.

In chapter three, Peter focuses our attention on the relationship between a husband and his wife; that wives should submit to them and, in return, husbands should be respectful and considerate to their wives. Finally, he teaches that all Christians should live in harmony with one another and be ready at all times with an answer when asked for the reason of our hope in Christ.

#### **Memory Verse:**

*“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives.” 1 Peter 3:1*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to put it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

#### **FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 3:1-6**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer. Read 1 Peter 3:1–22.

From the perspective of our secular world, marriage is a two-way street down which man and woman walk together in a fifty-fifty partnership. In stark contrast to this, the biblical perspective requires each partner to give *one hundred percent* to the marriage relationship. Wives are called to submit, while husbands are called to respect, so that in all things harmony is the objective. But in a society where a woman is taught early on to believe “*you’ve come a long way baby*,” the word *submission* has become a hot-button topic. In fact, it could possibly be the least favorite Christian teaching in the church because it is so often misunderstood.

Biblical submission of the wife does not require blind obedience on her part, nor does it imply that she is inferior. Rather, the wife who is willing to accept her husband's authority is also willing to accept God's design for her marriage, allowing her husband his rightful place of responsibility and leadership in the home.

1. What is Peter's primary reason in verse 1 for asking wives to submit to their husbands? What does he claim would "win over" the husbands?

It is worth noting that in Peter's day, the wives throughout most of the Roman Empire were expected to embrace the religion of their husbands. For many, the idea of wives submitting to Jesus Christ first—whether or not their husbands approved—was revolutionary. Peter's intended goal was that *without words* the wife would be able to influence or win over the unbelieving husband to Christ.

2. Peter did not intend that a wife was never to speak, but rather that she was not to resort to useless discussions and arguments or even nagging that became counterproductive. What specific type of conduct would win over a non-believing husband? v. 2

3. What should a Christian wife not rely solely upon in order to get attention? v. 3

- a. If a woman relies only on her outward beauty regimen to make her beautiful, she ignores the most important aspect of beauty in God's eyes—what is it? v. 4

- b. What value does Peter say God places upon the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit?  
v.4

Any Christian woman should be able to make her statement of beauty based upon the person she is on the *inside*, not merely on outward adornments or fashion trends. Her behavior as a Christian *silently speaks* volumes about the power of the Holy Spirit to exert great influence on her husband, whether or not he is a believer. But in the case of an unbelieving husband, God is able to use her to win him to the Lord.



4. Personal: Compare the time *you* spend on outward preparation and adornment to the amount of time you spend on cultivating your *inner beauty*. Think about it: is your priority your mirror or your Bible at the start of your day? How can James 1:21–26 encourage you to concentrate more on *your* inner beauty?

To support his teaching on the importance of wives submitting to husbands, Peter turns to the Old Testament example of Sarah as one of the holy women in Scripture who obeyed her husband (vv. 5–6). The word used for *obeyed* in verse 6 means: “to listen to.” In other words, Sarah took an interest in her husband’s interests. She listened and responded in an appropriate way throughout the course of her married life to Abraham and she is remembered for it. Her response to Abraham as “master” is one of loving submission and willing acceptance to follow him into the unknown by doing what is right.

Nowhere in Scripture do we find the command for a wife to submit to her husband on the grounds of fear, intimidation, or abuse from him. In fact, the NIV translation of verse 6 says a woman’s submission should “*not give way to fear*.” A Christian wife should not be forced into submissive behavior at the hands of her husband. If she finds herself in that position, she should seek help from those in authority in the church.

## **SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 3:7**

Read 1 Peter 3:7 for review.

Peter uses fewer words in addressing the husband (v.7), but the responsibility placed on him is greater and in ways more difficult.

1. A husband should . . . (finish the sentences below by forming your answers from verse 7, and try to give an example for each).

a. *Live with his wife according to what?* \_\_\_\_\_

*example:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. *Give her honor in what way?* \_\_\_\_\_

*example:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. *Treat her as equal in terms of what? (See Galatians 3:28–29)* \_\_\_\_\_

*example:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What aspect of a husband's spiritual life is dramatically affected by how he responds?
3. If the husband lives up to his role as stated in verse 7, what difference could it make in the marriage relationship? Please share your thoughts.
4. Personal: If you are a wife, are you making it harder or easier for your husband to fulfill his role? Do you have the desire to get along with him and a willingness to be satisfied with less than you may want to have?

If you are single, what are you learning now that will help you later on if you marry?

Modeling Christ-like behavior in the church setting means very little if we cannot, as God's chosen people, bring that same attitude and behavior into the home. The home-front is the greatest battlefield! It is here that often the most intense spiritual battles are won or lost!

### THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 3:8-14

Read 1 Peter 3:8-14 for review.

What believer isn't eager to receive a blessing from God? Peter realized that these believers were about to face some very hard times, causing him to reveal the secret to quietly trusting God, while at the same time living in harmony with others. The result of this kind of obedience will be God's blessing every time.

Try reading verse 8 in several different translations. Do the words Peter uses here suggest the idea of *teamwork*? Peter first approached the subject of loving one another in chapter one (v. 22). His emphasis here again suggests that harmony within the body of Christ is a deliberate choice that is made with concerted effort on the part of believers. Harmony is all about getting along and agreeing with one another, which does not happen by accident. Here we are given the *key* to harmony: five BE-attitudes that, if maintained, will help to build and strengthen unity in the body.

1. Look up each "*be-attitude*" from verse 8 in your dictionary or other Bible resource. Then look up the scriptural references indicated and write a brief statement about each one. Keep in mind that your goal is building harmony.

- *Be of one mind* (Philippians 1:27) –

- *Be compassionate* (1 Corinthians 12:26) –

- *Be loving* (1 Thessalonians 4:9–10) –

- *Be tenderhearted* (Ephesians 4:32) –

- *Be courteous* (Philippians 2:2–4) –

2. Personal: Do any of *your* "*be-attitudes*" need adjusting?

Right attitude is essential to maintaining right behavior, which brings God's blessing. While it may be natural for people in the world to trade insult for insult and evil for evil, Jesus Christ taught otherwise, setting an example for all believers to follow.

3. According to verse 9, what does Peter instruct believers *to do* and *not to do*? Why?

a. When did Peter first hear this lesson taught and by whom? See Matthew 5:44.

4. Verses 10–12 are quoted from Psalm 34:12–16. In them Peter gives the recipe for a happy life. List the four things we are told to do.

1)

2)

3)

4)

God-honoring speech followed by action leads to good deeds. Helping others leads to building good relationships, allowing us to anticipate problems and deal with them before they get out of hand.

a. When we do our part, what truth can we hold onto? v. 12

b. What is God's position toward those who do evil? v. 12

At this point in Peter's letter the subject of persecution comes into view. Peter's question, "*Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?*" (v.13), is a rhetorical one. He is not saying that if believers do everything correctly they will not suffer persecution, but rather that they may suffer even if they do what is right.

5. What does Peter say about the one who suffers for righteousness sake? v.14 What word of encouragement does he quote from Isaiah 8:12?

The word “blessed” (v.14) can be defined as *highly privileged*. This has nothing to do with taking delight from circumstances; rather it refers to the fact that if a believer is living righteously and is persecuted, no one can harm them spiritually or keep them from God’s promises. The word “troubled” means to be *disturbed* or *shaken* by emotional turmoil. When we fear the Lord alone, we need not fear anything or become troubled by anyone else’s threats.

#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 3:15-22**

Read 1 Peter 3:15-22 for review.

1. In verses 15–17, Peter lays out three specific actions on the believer’s part that will free us from fear and equip us to handle difficult people and situations.

##### ***Set apart Christ as Lord in your heart (v.15)***

Fear and faith cannot be present in your heart at the same moment—one will exclude the other. Isaiah 8:13 (NRSV) tells us: “*But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*” Record your thoughts below . . .

- a. Have *you* given Christ His rightful place as Lord of your heart and life?
- b. Do you acknowledge that He is in control of the events of your life?
- c. Does *fear* or *faith* occupy your heart at this very moment?

##### ***Get ready to answer those that have questions (v.15)***

Every Christian should be prepared at all times to give a clear and reasonable defense of their faith. We need not worry about being theologians, but we should be armed with the truth of Scripture and ready to give our reasons for believing in Jesus Christ.

- a. What two words should frame the composition of our presentation of the Gospel? (v.15)  
Why do you think this is important?

- b. If called upon, would you be able to give a concise five-minute testimony of your faith that includes the main elements of how you came to Christ? In the space below practice this, using some bullet points that will help guide you. Carry with you a 3 x 5 card for review until you gain confidence and watch what opportunities God will give you!

***Keep a clear conscience at all times (v.16)***

Any time there is a check from the Holy Spirit in your heart, stop as soon as you recognize it and ask for God's forgiveness. That gentle inner conviction will help you to keep short accounts with God and keep the channel open for Him to use you.

- a. Not only is God working in your heart and mind through His Spirit, He is also working in others. When they insult or berate you as a believer, what effect will your testimony have upon them? v.16
- b. What conclusion does Peter draw in verse 17?

Peter goes on in verses 18–22, to speak about Christ's suffering on our behalf: *"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit"* (v.18). We can never exhaust the end of this truth or its application to our hearts!

- 2. Personal: As you ponder the full significance of verses 18–22, consider whether *you* have entered the fullness of all that this means. Please share your thoughts.

Peter shares two illustrations in these verses to reassure us of Christ's victory and our eternal security: (1) After His resurrection but before His ascension into heaven, Christ descended (v.19) to proclaim His victory over death and God's judgment on the disobedient spirits or angels. (2) Just as Noah's family was shut into the ark of God's salvation, the moment a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior, they are placed securely into God's eternal keeping. The baptism referred to here (v. 21) is not that of water (the flood waters did not save Noah), but rather the power of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism does not provide believers with a clear conscience before God; the cleansing of the Holy Spirit does.

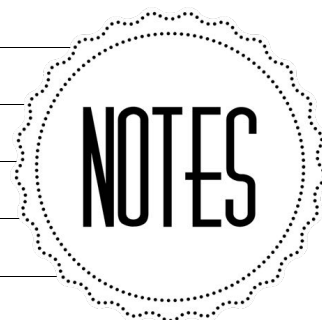
3. How does Titus 3:4–8 help with your understanding of this?

We have further assurance of our salvation in the fact that Jesus Christ is currently at God's right hand in heaven (v. 22). He has broken the power over evil. All authorities and powers—good and evil—are subject to Him. In the very near future, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

4. Is He *your* Lord? How does this knowledge strengthen your faith today?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.









SO IF YOU ARE SUFFERING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

KEEP ON

doing what is right

and

TRUST

Yourself

TO GOD WHO MADE YOU

for He will never fail you.



## Lesson 4 – 1 Peter 4:1-19

The return of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. It's time for all Christians to stop living for self and become serious about living for God! Jesus suffered and we too must be prepared to suffer. We are called to suffer for doing what is right. We can commit ourselves to God, trusting Him to keep us—by any road, at any cost.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“So if you are suffering according to God’s will, keep on doing what is right, and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you.” 1 Peter 4:19 (NLT)*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to put it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 4:1-6**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 4:1–19.

The suffering that Christ endured was due to the righteous life He lived. If we are to follow in His steps, we are to arm ourselves with the same attitude of mind and purpose Jesus had. We too must be willing to suffer; we too have been chosen to live holy lives. *“Being armed”* means being enabled and empowered through Christ to obey Him in every situation.

1. What does Peter say happens to the believer who has the same mind about suffering that Christ had? v. 1

Is Peter saying that suffering cleanses people from sin? No, 1 John 1:8 says that *“if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.”* Peter is not saying that when we suffer for doing what is right we will not stumble or sin again. What he does mean is since Christians have *died in Christ* and are *one with Him*, we are free from sin’s power and penalty. We are finished with sin when our suffering causes us to obey God more faithfully.

2. When believers cease to live in the flesh, for whom do they live?

Peter states quite emphatically (v. 3) that our past experience with sin is enough for us to close the door on the examples he lists here. Notice that he does not go into detail defining these terms. His readers would have understood exactly what he meant. (Note: the word *Gentiles* in this verse is a reference to non-Christians.)

3. What are the activities in which we as believers are not to indulge? v. 3 (As you are writing these down, cross reference them using the resources you have on hand to uncover the depth of their meaning. Think about the toll they will take on the Christian’s life if left unchecked over time.)

a. Personal: Can you point to any currently present in your life that you need to get rid of?

Christians should realize that the attitudes and actions Peter mentions have no place in their lives. He says that non-believers will think it strange that we do not indulge with them (v. 4). They will even become offended when we refuse to do so.

4. Personal: Share a time when you have endured verbal abuse or slander because of your faith in Christ.

Non-believers tend to resent the *convicting purity* of the believer's life. Often without words, just the presence of a believer among non-believers is offensive to them. The resulting effect is often slander towards the Christian. If non-believers can make believers look bad, they tend to feel better or somehow justified in their own sinful behavior. Those who practice an ungodly lifestyle and who point fingers at Christians for refusing to do so seem at times to have the upper hand. Ultimately, God will have the last word. He will act on behalf of His own. The time is coming when everyone will give an account to God!

## **SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 4:7-11**

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11 for review.

The fact that God is “ready to judge” means that the “end of all things is at hand” (v. 7). The early Christians Peter addressed in this letter were facing great persecution, needing to take comfort in the fact that their suffering would one day come to an end. We too must realize that Christ could come at any moment! The reality of this great truth should challenge us to be watchful and ready at all times.

In verses 7–11, Peter focuses on four ways we can prepare for Christ's coming. Use these points to determine how ready *you* are to see Him face to face.

1. ***Be serious and watchful in your prayers*** (v. 7) The NIV translates *serious* and *watchful* as *clear minded* and *self-controlled*.

a. How would these be important when engaging in spiritual warfare during prayer?

b. What importance did Jesus place on these attitudes? Why? See Matthew 26:41

Peter knew from experience how weak and vulnerable a believer could become when facing temptation without being grounded in prayer. He had slept in the Garden instead of praying with Jesus and, when the trial came, Peter denied His Lord. He didn't want others to repeat his mistake but to be serious and prayed up!

c. Personal: How are *you* able to maintain a clear head when you pray? Are you watchful for the Lord's return?

2. ***Be fervent in your love for one another*** (v. 8) The deepest love one can have is forgiving love. This kind of *agape*' love is the basis for all relationships in the church. It is commanded of us because it is a deliberate decision we make and not a feeling we have. It is literally *God's love in action*. Its goal is always to seek the good of the other person involved.

- a. Why does Peter say it is important to love one another in this way?
- b. What similar statement do you find in Proverbs 10:12?
- c. Personal: Is God asking you to *agape*' someone He's placed in your life? How can you show God's love to them?

### **THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 4:7-11 (CONTINUED)**

1. ***Be hospitable to one another without grumbling*** (v. 9) Hospitality is a tangible expression of love, which Peter commanded the believers to exhibit toward one another. When the banner of love is linked to hospitality, it raises the standard of behavior to a higher level.

- a. What should the believer keep in mind when extending this courtesy to others? Why would this be important?
- b. There are times when demonstrating hospitality can seem more of a duty than a joy. At such times what should you remember? See Matthew 25:40 and Mark 9:41

2. ***Be a good steward of your gifts*** (v. 10) Since every believer has received a spiritual gift from God to use in service to the body of Christ, the Christian is therefore capable of ministering to others. The word *gift* (charisma) literally means a *gift of grace*. God has blessed us with this grace, giving us the responsibility of sharing our gift(s) with others. What has been given to each individual is to benefit the body as a whole. Through our sharing, we are administering the “manifold (many faceted) grace of God” in its various forms.

Verse 11 divides the gifts of grace into two broad categories: *speaking* and *serving*. The *speaking* gifts include: preaching, teaching, evangelism, prophecy, speaking in tongues, encouragement, and leadership. The *serving* gifts include: assistance or encouragement that benefits or contributes towards the needs of those within the body of Christ, healing, miracles, and showing mercy.

a. Personal: Do you know what *your* spiritual gift(s) are? If so, how are you using them to serve the body of Christ?

If you don't know what gift is yours, make it a matter of prayer and searching the Scripture to find out! For further study, what do you learn from the following:

- Romans 12:6–8
- 1 Corinthians 12:1–11
- Ephesians 4:4–16

#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 4:12-19**

Read 1 Peter 4:12–19 for review.

The Bible instructs Christians in this passage not to be surprised by persecution or suffering, for both are part of God's plan to bring His children to maturity. Jesus Himself warned His followers: *"If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you"* (John 15:20). So what should a believer do? Trust God to help you through it. The fire of the trial will test your endurance and refine your faith.

1. When you do suffer, in what can you rejoice? v. 13
  
2. What example of suffering does Peter mention in verse 14?

Suffering has meaning because as we are tried, we come into deeper fellowship with Jesus Christ. We can rejoice in the midst of great difficulty, knowing that God is in control of every area of our lives—even the painful ones.

- a. If you are reproached for your faith, what does Peter say about you? Why? v. 14
  
- b. What should your response be? What should it *not* be? v. 16
  
- c. In contrast to verse 16, for what actions should a believer never suffer? v.15 (Notice the variables in this list.)

The believer's choices in life should give forth a testimony that identifies them as true followers of Jesus Christ. The reverse of this can also be true—the lack of persecution in a person's life can suggest that their lifestyle choices do not reveal their true identification with Christ.

The reference to judgment in verses 17–18 is two-fold: (1) It refers to the trials and sufferings of the believer that have a purifying and refining effect; and (2) It also refers to God judging all individuals according to their deeds. Peter quotes from Proverbs 11:31 to illustrate that unlike

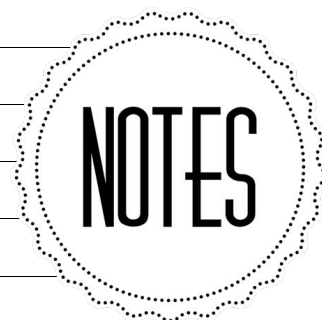


followers of God, non-believers are not a part of His refining judgment. The judgment they face is judicial and takes the form of punishment. When Christ returns they will face the fire of His judgment.

3. What word of encouragement does Peter extend to the believers in v. 19? Briefly note a personal testimony of God's faithfulness.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.





Therefore

HUMBLE YOURSELVES

under the mighty  
hand of God, that

He may exalt you in time

CASTING ALL YOUR

CARE UPON HIM

for He carries  
for you."

1 PETER 5:6-7



## Lesson 5 – 1 Peter 5:1-14

It has been said that the church rises and falls on the spiritual quality of its leaders. Immature leaders motivated by personal gain seem to replicate their kind among the flock. Before saying goodbye in his final chapter, Peter strongly challenges the leaders to serve by example, with motives and methods worthy of their high calling. He then exhorts all believers to humbly submit to God and to one another and to stand strong in the face of the enemy's resistance.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6–7*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 PETER 5:1-4**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 Peter 5:1–14.

Peter addresses this portion of his letter to the elders who serve the church congregation. The word *elder* refers to those officials who serve as pastoral leaders, occupying a position that is crucial to believers experiencing suffering and persecution. Peter includes himself as a *fellow elder*—one of them.

1. Notice the two significant statements Peter makes regarding himself. v. 1

a. He was a witness of what?

Proclaiming himself a witness of Christ's sufferings would cause Peter to recall the most painful time of his own life. Think back to the kind of witness Peter was at the time of Christ's death. (See Matthew 26:31–35; Luke 22:31; Luke 22:54–62.)

- b. Even though he initially failed Jesus as a witness, in what way would Peter be included as a partaker?

At the time Peter wrote this letter, he was a church leader who had sinned, repented, and been restored by God's grace, allowing him to be included as one who would share in Christ's glory. He has become a pillar of the Jerusalem church but wrote as a fellow elder. He states that a pastor's primary role is to *shepherd the flock of God*.

- 2. In verses 2–3, Peter summarizes the pastor's role. Using your resources, look up the word *shepherd* and write a definition.
- 3. In verses 2–3, Peter highlights the right and wrong ways to shepherd the flock of God. Jot down the descriptive words he uses in the following for:
  - a. Wrong motives (v. 2):
  - b. Right motives (v. 2):
  - c. Wrong methods (v. 3):
  - d. Right methods (v. 3):

In order to better understand Peter's heart on this matter and the emphasis of his words, take some time to carefully read through the Old Testament passage of Ezekiel 34. In it is a graphic portrayal of the problems with irresponsible shepherds and the detrimental effects upon God's flock. Then answer the questions below . . .

- a. How does God feel about these shepherds? What will He do with them?
  - b. Contrast their behavior with that of the True Shepherd.
  - c. What do you learn in this passage about God's love and care for His flock?
  - d. The perspective Peter put forth in chapter 5 was indelibly written on his heart. See John 21:15–17 to why this was so; record your thoughts on it.
  - e. Think about it: What are some of the duties of the pastor-shepherds in your own church? Take a moment to pray for them and their huge responsibility.
4. Peter concludes this section of the passage by focusing on the highest motive for shepherding God's people; what is it? What reward will the shepherd receive? v. 4

The *Crown of glory* is not a literal crown that each person will wear, rather a common glory that all pastors/leaders will share—those who are faithful servants as well as those who have persevered through suffering.

5. Personal: How does knowing you will share in this *Crown of glory* encourage *you* to continue serving in hope?

## **SECOND DAY – 1 PETER 5:5-7**

Read 1 Peter 5:5–7.

The remainder of the chapter is directed to those in the church who are not pastors, but are most likely younger in terms of their Christian maturity and experience. The pastor's responsibility is to shepherd the flock, and the members of the flock have the responsibility to submit to those in leadership over them. Again, Peter issues a command rather than an option. The word *submit* used here means to *defer to the authority of another*. It indicates a cooperative spirit and a willingness to support the pastor.

1. What motive is there for believers to be submissive? v. 5

a. How does Hebrews 13:17 support what Peter is stating in verse 5?

The combination of godly leaders supported by submissive followers will result in the mutual respect and humility between all members in the body of Christ. Peter's exhortation to be "clothed with humility" suggests that this virtue should be a part of the believer's spiritual wardrobe.

2. Briefly describe the occasion and example of humility displayed by Jesus in each of the following passages . . .

a. John 13:1–17 (Consider the impact this scene would have on Peter's mind and heart.)

b. Philippians 2:1–11 (Paul the Apostle shared here about the unity that comes through humility, modeled by Jesus Christ that we are to follow.)

c. Personal: Charles Spurgeon wrote that, "*Humility is to make a right estimate of one's self.*" By doing so, we can be made aware of our own strengths and weaknesses. We can also commit these to God to help us improve where needed. How can this help *you* to follow Christ's example in serving others?



Notice that the verbs Peter uses in verse 5 are in the present tense, meaning that God *continually opposes* the proud—those who think they do not need to listen to Him. But He *continually give grace* to those who listen and humbly follow Him, particularly in the midst of suffering and persecution.

3. What does Peter mean when he says: “*Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God*” (v. 6)? What happens to those who follow this command?

Is the believer who trusts God fully trusting in Him if he/she hangs on to their worries, problems, and struggles in life? The answer to fear and worry is found in verse 7: “*Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” Below are three passages that contain the secret to knowing how to cast your care on Him and the results you will achieve. Write down what you discover here and begin applying these principles.

- Psalm 55:22
  
- Matthew 11:28
  
- Philippians 4:6–7

### **THIRD DAY – 1 PETER 5:8-9a**

Read 1 Peter 5:8–9 for review.

If you cast yourself and your cares on God, you are safe. If you do not, Satan will gain the advantage. C.S. Lewis once said, “*The two mistakes Christians make in talking about Satan are that we either joke about him or we ignore him.*” Neither of these can be an option for the believer. The words *be sober* and *be vigilant* could better be translated as *be self-controlled* and *alert*. The true intent here means *pay attention—wake up!* It is a strong warning for every Christian to realize that we are in a life-and-death spiritual battle and the stakes are very high!

All of the persecution believers will ever face comes down to one source: “*your enemy the devil.*” He is known by various names in Scripture: *Lucifer, Accuser, Beelzebub, Destroyer, and Satan*. Regardless of what you call him, he is God’s archenemy. As such, he is also the enemy of God’s

people and the source of all evil in the world. Although he has no power over God, he does what he can to divide and destroy those who belong to God. We must learn to be aware of his tactics and always be on guard.

1. How much do you know about this “roaring lion” that is seeking to devour you? It is vital that you have a correct understanding of the person and work of Satan and his demonic forces in the world. Here’s your opportunity to examine some of his activities, limitations, and ultimate destiny. Look up the references that will enable you to say that *you are not ignorant of his devices* (2 Corinthians 2:11)!

a. Satan's **activities** include:

- Job 1:7
- Matthew 13:19
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- 2 Corinthians 11:14
- Ephesians 6:16
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18

b. Satan's **limitations**:

- Job 1:12
- James 4:7
- 1 John 2:13b
- 1 John 5:18
- Revelation 12:10–11

c. Satan's ***destiny***:

- Matthew 25:41
- John 16:11
- Romans 16:20
- 1 John 3:8
- Revelation 20:2–3
- Revelation 20:10

2. From the exercise you just completed, what stands out to you? Why?

3. What instruction does Peter give in verse 9 about how you must deal with Satan?

- a. The word *resist* is a reference to maintaining a position of defense rather than one of attack. What do *you* think is the best way to resist him and remain steadfast in the faith?

**FOURTH DAY – 1 PETER 5:9b-14**

Read 1 Peter 5:9-14.

1. What statement does Peter make about universal suffering in verse 9?

2. How does this reality underscore the importance of believers praying for one another? Do you take this to heart?

3. In terms of the bigger picture, what does Peter say God will do? v. 10

4. Which of these saving grace actions are you most in need of right now? Why?

In verses 12–14, Peter writes his final thoughts using the first-century custom of offering greetings at the conclusion of his letter. He mentions Silas, who served as Peter’s secretary, taking down the dictation of this letter as Peter spoke it into existence.

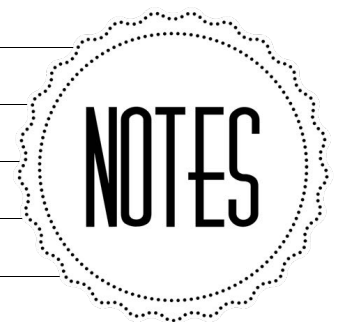
5. For what reason does Peter say he wrote this letter? v. 12


The “kiss of love” (v. 14) was a form of greeting popular with the early church. It represented unity and expressed love among the believers. Today a handshake or hug is the equivalent. But no matter what greeting is used, the point is that we are to let our love for others show through our actions.

Peter ends his letter as he began it, by wishing the believers the peace that comes to all those who are in Christ Jesus. Do *you* have His peace right now? If not, would you like to? Just bow in His presence and invite Him into your heart by repeating these words: *“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner in need of Your forgiveness. I ask You right now to be my Savior and Lord. I thank You for dying for me and rising again from the dead and for granting me Your peace that passes all understanding.”*

If you prayed this prayer of forgiveness, please tell your group leader or pastor (or someone you trust) today as an open profession of your new-found faith. God bless you and welcome to the family of God!

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?





"His divine power  
has given to us  
**ALL**  
things  
that pertain to  
life and  
godliness..."

2 PETER 1:3





## Lesson 6 - 2 Peter 1:1-21

Have you ever taken your Christian faith for granted? Those of us who are not pressing on toward our heavenly goal may find that we are becoming stagnant in our spiritual growth. The miracle of transformation happens in an instant—the twinkling of an eye— but the process of sanctification takes a lifetime! As we learn and grow, we realize that we are the ones responsible to make sure we are adding certain virtues to our lives as we await Christ's return.

Peter wrote this second letter most likely from prison in Rome, around A.D. 66–67. While his purpose in writing the first letter was to comfort those in suffering, his second letter contains a strong warning for believers to recognize false teachers and refute their teaching. As Peter was preparing to die at the hands of his Roman executioners, he encouraged the flock of God to become serious about growing up in Christ.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“ . . . His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3–4*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 2 PETER 1:1-2**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer. Read 2 Peter 1:1–21.

There is a difference between the way Peter identified himself at the beginning of his first letter and here as he begins the second one. This difference reflects the transformation that has taken place in his life.

1. Compare 1 Peter 1:1 with 2 Peter 1:1. What word does Peter add to describe who he is?
2. Look up each of the words below and share what each title represents in terms of service for Christ.
  - *Apostle* –
  - *Bondservant* –
3. What does the word *bondservant* tell you about the character God had molded into Peter's life as he continued to follow Christ?

The readers of Peter's second letter were under the attack of false teachers infiltrating the body of Christ. It is clear from his message that his audience needed reassurance that their faith was indeed real. He writes to "those who have obtained like precious faith with us" (v. 1). Literally, he means that these believers had a faith as precious as the apostle's.

Peter's initial greeting in verse 2 is identical to 1 Peter 1:2. When he mentions *grace*, he is speaking of God's unmerited favor. The *peace* he refers to is the peace that comes about as the result of being reconciled to God through Christ. Here in verse 2, he adds to this reassurance by expounding on the blessing.

4. By what measure are *grace* and *peace* given to the Christian? How? v. 2
5. Peter is not talking about the intellectual accumulation of information but rather a knowledge that comes through personal application and experience. Which do *you* possess? Please explain.



## **SECOND DAY – 2 PETER 1:3-4**

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

The same God who calls us and blesses us with an abundance of His grace and peace, also enables us to grow spiritually. His divine power is manifested in the life of every believer, coming directly from the Holy Spirit within us. Apart from God we do not possess the resources needed to live a holy life, but Jesus Christ has *given us everything we need* for life and godliness. The moment we become born again, God empowers us to live in a way that glorifies Him!

1. How have we received this blessing? v. 3
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Personal: What was it about the Lord's glory and goodness that initially attracted *you* to Him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What else have you received? Why? v. 4

The promises of God are assured because they are founded upon the character of the One making them. They come through the character of Christ—His own glory and goodness. We can count on them because His character remains the same; He never changes! When Peter talks about participating in the divine nature and escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust (v. 4), he means we are continually moving closer to God and further away from *self* and the *sinful nature* we were born with.

4. Personal: Can you think of a way you are demonstrating less of your previous sinful nature and more of the character of Christ?

### **THIRD DAY – 2 PETER 1:5-11**

Read 2 Peter 1:5-11 for review.

Verses 5–7 describe in detail what this divine nature looks like and your role in this transforming process.

1. God has asked you to add to your faith characteristics of godliness. Using the resources you have on hand, look up and define each of these qualities:

a. *Virtue*

b. *Knowledge*

c. *Self-control*

d. *Perseverance*

e. *Godliness*

f. *Brotherly kindness*

g. *Love*

2. Personal: Which of these qualities is the Holy Spirit helping to work into your life at the moment? Can you give an example of *how*?

Peter goes on to say in verse 8, “*For if these things are yours and abound . . .*” Literally it means, *if you possess these qualities in increasing measure*, pointing to the fact that the process is never finished but is always ongoing. To remain effective throughout the process, you must stop periodically to take stock of how you are doing.

3. What does Peter say about the person who lacks these virtues? vv. 9–10

- a. What is the potential for this kind of individual? (v. 9) How far will he or she go? Do you know someone like this?

In verses 10–11, Peter issues a word of encouragement and a challenge. The virtues he has just described are what enable you as a believer to *make your calling and election sure*! If you currently have doubt about the validity of your faith, perhaps you have *not been diligent* in your God-given responsibility. If your life does not show positive change, you will probably begin to question whether your faith is genuine.

- b. If this hits home to your heart today, take a moment to prayerfully commit yourself to the Lord, asking Him to enable you to make some changes.

Personal: On a scale of 1–10, with ten being best, how much effort are you putting towards this process of change? What can you do to give more effort?

- c. If you respond positively to Peter’s challenge here, what two statements of truth can you claim from the following . . .
  - v. 10b
  - v. 11

## **FOURTH DAY – 2 PETER 1:12-21**

Read 2 Peter 1:12–21 for review.

Christians need to be reminded—even those firmly established in the faith. Three times in verses 12–15, Peter mentions the words *remind*, *reminding*, *reminder*. Some thirty years earlier, Jesus declared that Peter would die a martyr. As death came closer, Peter no doubt felt the weight of this truth and so, wrote with greater urgency. Those who do have the opportunity to know that death is near will desire to pass on to others that which is closest to their heart. They want others to understand that which is of the greatest importance and benefit once they are gone.

1. How did Jesus speak of Peter’s death in John 21:18–19?

Jesus prophesied that Peter would die a martyr as the result of following Him. The words “stretch out your hands” refer to death by crucifixion. Tradition holds that Peter requested that he be crucified upside down because he did not feel himself worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

2. What did Peter determine to do as long as he remained alive? 2 Peter 1:13

*In your opinion . . .*

- a. What would a *young* believer need to be reminded about?
  - b. What kind of reminder would *you* give to a *mature* believer?
  - c. What reminder would be appropriate for a *backslidden* believer?
3. What did Peter say that he would be careful to do according to verse 15? What do you think he meant by this?

Peter wrote of his impending departure with calmness and courage. He was prepared to leave his *tent*—his temporary body (v. 13) and move into God’s eternal kingdom (v. 11).

4. What does 1 Corinthians 15:42–44 say about the believer’s new body?
5. Suppose for a moment that you knew you had only a short time to remain on this earth. What would you diligently try to pass on to those closest to you? What would you want them to remember after you are gone?

Peter wanted his readers to know that the truth of God’s saving power through Christ was not conceived in the mind of man, rather that it rests solely on the confirmation of Scripture. In verses 16–18, Peter revisits the moment of the *Transfiguration of Jesus*, which he had personally witnessed several decades earlier: “*We were eyewitnesses of His majesty*” (v.16). He had the unique experience of being present when God the Father bestowed honor and glory on the Son.

6. Take a moment to read the account in Matthew 17:1–8, and consider the following . . .
  - a. Who did Jesus take with Him up on the mountain?
  - b. Why do *you* think He chose these three to witness this incredible event?
  - c. Who appeared to talk with Jesus? v. 3
  - d. What did the voice in the clouds declare? Who was speaking? v. 5
  - e. How did the disciples respond? What did Jesus do? vv. 6–7

The Transfiguration of Jesus revealed the true nature of who Jesus is—the glory and majesty of His character. It provided a preview of His Second Coming when He returns in the fullness of His glory. This was God the Father meeting with God the Son in the presence of eyewitnesses!

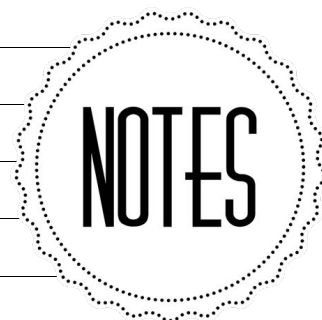
Peter's retelling of this story emphasizes his authority in teaching about the person and work of Christ. As glorious as this event was, Peter notes here in chapter 1 that we have another assurance regarding Christ—much more reliable and trustworthy than the eyewitness accounts—we have the Holy Scriptures! Peter was so confident about the authority and reliability of God's written Word that he counseled his readers to use the Scriptures as their guide until the day of Christ's return!

7. How does Peter describe Scripture in verse 19?

The “morning star” is a reference to Jesus Christ at the Second Coming (see Revelation 22:16). Peter's intent here is that until the return of Christ, we are to walk in the light of the truth of God's Word. He has described the believer's journey as a *pilgrimage* through a dark world and God has provided the Lamp of Truth to guide us. If we receive His Word and obey, we will be kept from the error of false teaching and discover a way of life that honors Him. How's *your* journey going?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.



The Lord  
**KNOWS**

**How**

**TO DELIVER**

the  
godly out of tempta-  
tions

and  
**TO RESERVE**

the unjust under  
punishment for the day of judgement.





## Lesson 7 - 2 Peter 2:1-22

Are you mature enough in your Christian walk to discern truth from error, and would you be able to recognize a false teacher if you came across one? Are you skillful enough in handling the Scripture to refute false teaching when you hear it? During the growth of the early church, believers were being bombarded with false teaching, prompting Peter to devote a good portion of his second epistle to the subject. It is worth noting that false teaching is every bit in evidence today as it was in Peter's day. In fact, if you don't know the truth of God's Word, you will be easy prey for those who propagate false teaching.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"...The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." 2 Peter 2: 9*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 2 PETER 2:1-3**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 2 Peter 2:1–22.

The closing verses of chapter 1 comprise the bridge conveying the severe warning in chapter 2. Previously, Peter explained that God gave His truth to holy men who spoke to people as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. True prophets spoke and wrote down God's words, but there were also false prophets at work. The information communicated by these false teachers was very destructive, contradicting the true prophets who were sent by God to awaken the people to turn from their sins.

Peter explains that these false teachings—heresies—were secretly brought in, meaning they were smuggled in. False teachers knowingly and purposely sought to turn people from the truth to their lies, which would ultimately lead to destruction and judgment. It begs the question: would you knowingly place yourself under the influence of someone spreading destructive heresies? Of course not! But some of those spreading false teaching do so in very clever and subtle ways.

1. If you've ever listened to and recognized a false teacher in action, you most likely know what to look for. Think about the characteristics of this type of individual that makes them so appealing. In *your* opinion . . .

a. What would they sound like?

b. What would their demeanor look like?

c. What would their message contain?

2. From where does Peter say the false teachers would come? v. 1

Think about it: for someone inside the church to be teaching false doctrine, they would have to be hearing the truth and then deliberately distorting it. Peter immediately focuses on the content that was heretical in this teaching: they were *denying the sovereign Lord who bought them* (v. 1). The word *bought* comes from *agorazo*, meaning to *redeem*.

The Old Testament passages of Exodus 6:6–7a and 2 Samuel 7:23 tell us that God redeemed Israel to make them His people, to show His awesome deeds, and to make His name known.

The New Testament usage of the word *redeem* means to buy a person out of slavery.

3. Take a look at 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 1 Peter 1:18-19. What do you find there about the price paid to redeem you? To whom do you now belong?

4. To what extent does Peter say these false teachers will go? What will they bring upon themselves as a result? v. 1

a. What will they cause many to do? What effect will this have on the reputation of Christ and the Gospel? v. 2

b. What is their method? v. 3

False teachers have every intention of exploiting others with stories they have manufactured for their own purpose or financial gain. They fleece the flock by distorting the truth, telling people what they want to hear. Peter says that though these teachers seem to be getting away with their sin for the time being, all the while *condemnation is hanging over them* and *destruction* will eventually be their end.

5. Personal: Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you have “stretched the truth” in order to achieve some sort of personal gain; whether it be monetary or for the purpose of looking good in someone else’s eyes? As the saying goes: “A person is as good as his or her word.” How good should a Christian’s word be? How good is *your* word?

## **SECOND DAY – 2 PETER 2:4-17**

Read 2 Peter 2:4-17 for review.

In case there were some who still did not believe in a future judgment, Peter gives three examples of God’s past judgment (vv. 4–8). Beginning with the broader look at the angelic realm of the cosmos and His judgment of the angels, Peter then moves to the judgment of all mankind in the worldwide flood, and then more locally to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These three judgments prove that absolutely no one is exempt from judgment—not even the angels. God is a God of justice and fairness who is not willing to compromise with unconfessed sin. But He is also a God of grace and mercy and willing to forgive any and all who come to Him with a truly repentant heart.

Noah believed God and was protected from the flood that covered the earth (Genesis 7:11-23). Abraham’s nephew, Lot, was also rescued from destruction (Genesis 19:1– 24), proving that

*“the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment”* (v. 9). The word “temptations” here could best be translated *trials*, which literally refers to *the test*. The New Testament consistently refers to the Second Coming of Christ as the final test. The Lord will act to rescue those that are His, but the ungodly will face judgment. The word “reserve” (v. 9) also means to *hold, keep, or guard*. It suggests that God is in control of judgment—He will have the final say with each person.

1. Verse 10 is a reference to the false teachers being included in God’s judgment. Describe the character of false teachers mentioned in this verse.

a. In contrast to the audacity of false teachers, what does v. 11 say about angels?

The false teacher’s claim to fame is usually the self-professed attainment of a higher level of knowledge and spirituality. Peter charges that they actually *blaspheme in matters they do not understand* (v.12). Meaning, that all of their apparent knowledge is worthless. They are *brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed*. Here in verses 12– 17, Peter graphically illustrates the character that is linked to this kind of person, underscoring the fact that our actions speak much louder than our words!

2. Fill in the chart below. Align the behavior next to the characteristic in each verse. The first one is done for you as an example. Once you complete the list, take a long look at it.

VERSE	CHARACTERISTIC	BEHAVIOR
v. 12	<i>brute beasts – creatures of instinct</i>	<i>blaspheme – speak evil of things they do not understand</i>
v. 13		
v. 14		
v. 15a		
v. 17		

3. In a sentence, summarize the outcome of these individuals.

### **THIRD DAY – 2 PETER 2:18-22**

Read 2 Peter 2:1-22 for review, focusing on verses 18-22.

The empty, boastful words of the false teachers were enticing to some believers in Peter's day, as they still are today. In the remaining verses of this chapter, Peter mentions who these false teachers target and the substance of their appeal.

1. From what you've learned, think about what Peter meant by the words he uses in verse 18. Record your own thoughts.:

*words of emptiness –*

*lewdness –*

*those who live in error –*

By appealing to lustful, sensual desires, these false teachers were very effective in drawing believers away from the truth of the gospel. They didn't go after strong, mature believers; rather their prime target was the newer or weaker Christians—those who were *unsteady* in the faith.

2. Contrast what these teachers offered versus the state of their condition. v. 19
  - a. What does Peter say in this verse about being a slave?
  - b. Look back at what Jesus had to say about the bondage of sin and how to become free. See John 8:31–36.
3. What does Peter say about the false teachers who know the truth but then turn away from it? In what way would they have been better off? vv. 21–22 (Think about this carefully.)

Peter's final point is a very strong, graphic one: "*A dog returns to his own vomit; a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire*" (v. 22). In other words, those who return to their evil life after becoming enlightened and cleansed by the Truth are no better than a dog that vomits and returns to it, or a pig that is washed clean but immediately returns to rolling in the mud. Animals do things naturally, but human beings who make an outward profession of faith without inwardly being transformed by the Holy Spirit will also soon return to their old way of life because it is so natural to them; they are comfortable with it.

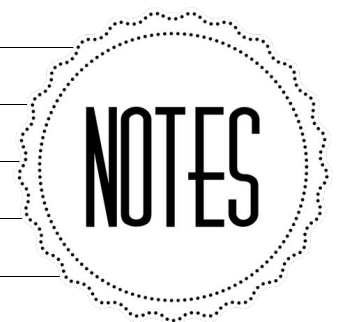
#### **FOURTH DAY – 2 PETER 2 REVIEW**

Take some time to thoughtfully navigate your way through this next exercise, keeping in mind that younger, weaker believers in the faith are more susceptible to false teachers.

1. Hebrews 5:12–14 give a clear reason to “grow up” in your faith. According to these verses, what is wrong with settling for just the *milk* of the Word? What is the advantage of moving on to solid food?
2. Look again at Ephesians 4:13–15. If a believer remains in a stage of *spiritual infancy*, what are you vulnerable to? What does God want you to do instead?
3. Hebrews 3:12–13 present the one thing that will hinder you from growing up— what is it?

Will you receive the exhortation from the Holy Spirit to hear His voice and return to Him?  
Close your study today with some time in prayer.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?





Second Peter 3:9

"the Lord is **NOT SLACK**  
concerning His promise,  
as some count slackness  
but is **LONGSUFFERING**  
toward us, not willing that  
any should perish but that  
ALL should come to repentance."







## Lesson 8 - 2 Peter 3:1-18

Peter just shared his insights on the dangers and doom of the false teachers and now returns to the heart of his message. He writes to all faithful believers, exhorting them to remember God's words as they look forward with anticipation to the Lord's return.

### **Memory Verse:**

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 2 PETER 3:1-7**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 2 Peter 3:1–18.

Waiting is one aspect of the Christian life that seems very difficult for most people. It is helpful and beneficial for believers to be engaged in something while we wait. Peter proceeds to tell his readers in chapter 3 that we are not to wait passively, but *actively*, by giving diligence to the way we live. With that thought in mind, he offers the perfect activity—wholesome thinking.

Turning away from the subject of the false teachers, Peter refers to his audience as beloved or dear friends. Returning once again to what is closest to his heart, his purpose is to stimulate believers to think about what awaits them in the future.

1. Keeping in mind the goal of false teachers to make believers think unwholesome thoughts, Peter makes reference (v. 2) to two potential areas of contaminated thinking targeted by false teachers. What are they?

By way of reminder, Peter points to the Old Testament passages in Scripture spoken by the prophets. He tells his readers not to take this lightly, simply because the future has not yet happened. The second area that needs protection from wrong thinking has to do with the “command given by the Lord through the apostles,” referring to the law of Christ.

- a. Repeatedly found in Scripture, what is this command? See John 13:34–35, and 15:12; Romans 13:9–10; James 2:8; 1 Peter 1:22 and 4:8; and 1 John 3:11.

Peter emphasized that “knowing this first” (v. 3)—knowing above all else—we must understand that in the last days scoffers will come.

2. Look up the word *scoffer* and write a definition.

- a. Describe what these individuals are like. v. 3 (See also 2 Peter 2:10). What is their argument? v. 4

Verses 5–7 point out the fact that though the false teachers knew the Old Testament, they deliberately chose to ignore and forget what Scripture says. They denied God’s intervention in past history.

3. What example does Peter use to support his claim of their denial? vv. 5–6

The Bible teaches that the God who created the heavens and the earth is the same God who will one day judge His creation. The One who has the power to create all things also has the power to end them!

- a. Instead of being destroyed by water as in Noah's day, what kind of judgment awaits those upon the earth at the Second Coming? v. 7
- b. Read about the coming judgment in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10–15. What new insight do you gain?

## **SECOND DAY – 2 PETER 3:8-10**

Read 2 Peter 3:8-10.

In light of God's impending judgment, Peter offers reasons for the Lord delaying His return. Knowing that the time left to us is limited, it behooves us to spend it loving those who resist and even oppose the gospel message, in the hope that we can bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

1. What does this perspective reveal to you about the heart of God? vv. 8–9
2. Does His delay in returning mean that He has forgotten His promise? What does it say about His priority?
3. There are only two things in this world that are eternal: God's Word and people. How does this reality help you with your priorities as you await the Lord's coming?
4. What statement does Peter give us about the coming day of the Lord? v. 10
5. The warning Peter uses here was issued by Jesus Himself. What was His emphasis in Matthew 24:36–44?
  - a. What additional insights do you gain from Revelation 3:3 and 16:15a?

- b. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11, how should you as a believer think and act?

The book of 2 Peter is the only one in the New Testament that depicts the world being destroyed by fire (v.10). When we read of the fire of God's judgment in Scripture, it refers to not only its purifying effect, but also its destruction of all that is evil, in preparation of Christ's eternal reign. Peter points to the fact that judgment will come and all those who do not believe will perish.

Jesus Christ's *unexpected*—though predicted—return will bring about the destruction of creation as we know it.

6. What does verse 10 say about the destruction of the following . . .

- a. The heavens –
- b. The elements –
- c. The earth –

The revelation of verse 10 is intended to emphasize that God's final judgment will be absolute and complete—nothing will escape His attention!

In case you have missed the point Peter underscores about the patience of God, take a moment to think about the following questions, recording your thoughts.

- What if the Lord had returned last year—last month—or last week? Would you have been ready to meet Him? How about 5 or 10 years ago? Think of the many that would have missed their opportunity if He was not so long suffering.
- Has God ever failed to keep a promise to *you*? Has He ever been late?
- Have you been expecting Him to fulfill His Word according to *your* time table?
- What have you learned about God's grace and love for *you* through this study?

### **THIRD DAY – 2 PETER 3:11-18**

Read 2 Peter 3:11–18 for review.

Since we know that everything here on earth will be burned up, we should put our attention and efforts into that which will last forever: God's Word and the saving of souls! This understanding should motivate us to periodically take stock of our lives and ensure that we are in pursuit of the things that will bring about lasting results for God's kingdom.

Peter's question, "*What kind of people ought you to be?*" (v. 11), is a rhetorical one. He has previously emphasized that Christians are to live holy lives. Those who are obedient will be in direct contrast to the ungodliness found in the world. Their lives will continue on after the coming destruction. Christians do not need to fear the *day of the Lord*, rather we can look forward to it!

In the closing verses of chapter 3, we again see active cooperation while awaiting the Lord's return. We are to be actively cooperating with God in the salvation of the lost, remaining steadfast in the faith, and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. Scripture does not explain *why* God chooses to use human beings as His instruments of grace, but apparently our willing response has an impact on *the day of the Lord*.

1. According to verse 13, what is every believer looking forward to? Why? Who promised it?
  - a. To understand what Peter means when he speaks about a place where "righteousness dwells," read the account in Revelation 21:1–4 and 22–27. In your own words, write a description of your future home.
  - b. As a believer, you need to be reminded that you are heading toward your eternal home. Your righteous actions now are the fruit of your choice to live a godly life. Soon you'll realize the fullness of your long-awaited reward. What are *you* looking forward to the most? Will you take a moment to thank Him for the home He is preparing for *you*?

#### **FOURTH DAY – 2 PETER 3:11-18 (continued)**

Peter ends his letter by encouraging his readers to apply themselves to practicing righteousness now, in preparation for the coming kingdom. He once again reiterates that believers are not to be passive, but to be diligent as we await His soon coming.

1. What, specifically, does Peter say we are to be diligent in doing? v. 14
  - a. Look back to 1 Peter 1:19, where these same words are used to describe Jesus Christ. Is Peter suggesting that *you* will live a perfect life? What does he mean?
  - b. As you await Christ's return, what are *you* doing to be found without spot and blameless?

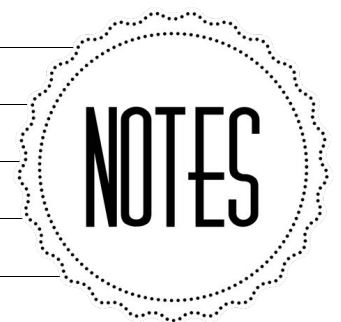
In order to be *like Christ*, the catalyst that motivates you to live a godly life is your anticipation of seeing Him. Peter makes his point in these verses by borrowing from the authority of the apostle Paul. He reminds us that Paul has made the same points in his letters and, though some of his writings may be difficult to understand, they are backed by the authority of God.

2. What have the false teachers done with these scriptural teachings? v. 16
3. Knowing their tactics beforehand, what is the warning here for us? v. 17
4. Verse 18 contains the key to remaining steadfast, free from error—what is it?
5. How meaningful is this to you at this point in your life? Please explain.

The Christian life was never meant to be lived standing still. It is a continual process of growth that finds its meaning and focus in the ever-increasing awareness of the person and character of Jesus Christ and His imminent return.

6. Personal: If you were to estimate your growth rate so far, what would you say? On a scale of 1–10, with 10 indicating *all* your effort, how do *you* measure up? Compare your learning of Scripture with your personal application of it.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?







if we confess our sins

He is  
FAITHFUL

and just

TO FORGIVE

us our sins and to

CLEANSE

us from all  
unrighteousness."



## **Lesson 9 - 1 John 1:1-10**

The letter of 1 John is widely recognized as authored by the apostle John to the Christians in Asia Minor, also known as modern Turkey. It was written around A.D. 85–90 to readers who knew John well. The purpose of the letter was to refute the efforts being made by false teachers to challenge church doctrine by combining the gospel message with prevailing philosophies of the day. In it, John reiterates the main truths of the gospel message and warns against heresies leading some to compromise. The emphasis of the letter is God’s love and the Christian’s need to love others. It is written in simple terms that feature sharp contrasts: light and darkness, truth and error, God and Satan, life and death, love and hate.

John was an eyewitness to Jesus’ earthly ministry and among the first called to follow Him. He was the last surviving apostle and one of the three who, along with his brother James and Peter, made up the Lord’s inner circle. John referred to himself in his writings as the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” He stood by Jesus at the crucifixion, being singled out by Him to care for His mother. John raced Peter to the empty tomb early on Resurrection morning and later walked with the risen Lord along the shore of Galilee. He is known as the “Apostle of Love” because love is the prominent theme in his writings. After writing his gospel account and the three letters from Ephesus, John was exiled to the island of Patmos and there wrote the Book of Revelation. He later returned to Ephesus where he lived out his final days until his death, approximately A.D. 100.

John’s personal testimony to his eyewitness account of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus was to affirm believers in the reality of their faith. He hoped that they might enter into the same kind of true fellowship he enjoyed with God.

### ***Memory Verse:***

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

## **FIRST DAY – 1 JOHN 1:1-4**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 1:1–10.

John was the oldest living apostle and Jesus' closest earthly friend, which meant that he was able to literally touch, see, and hear for himself the very embodiment of life—eternal life. Why would it be important for John to begin his letter with these words? Because his readers were listening to false teachers declaring that Jesus' humanity was not real. Some believed all existing matter was sinful and the body evil (Gnosticism); while others believed Jesus was merely an angel. John countered these false accusations by reminding believers that he had firsthand experience with Jesus. Throughout the remainder of his letter, he will continue to reveal his personal observations about the Lord.

*“That which was from the beginning . . .”* (v.1). The relative phrase “that which” encompasses every aspect about the *Word of Life* that the apostles knew and experienced. This *Word of Life* describes the Son as the visible expression of the invisible God.

1. Compare vv. 1–2 here with John's gospel in John 1:1–2. What similarities do you see?
2. How does John affirm here in vv. 1–2 what he earlier stated in John 1:14?

The reference to Jesus as the *Word of Life* is the Greek term *Logos*, signifying the very beginning.

3. How is Jesus Christ—the *Logos*—the agent that reveals God to humanity? See Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:15–17, and Hebrews 1:2–3a to form your answer.

*“This one who is life from God was shown to us, and we have seen him . . . he is the one who is eternal life”* (1 John 1:2 NIV). The Greek word for life is *zoe*, referring to the life of the spirit and the soul. It is expressive of the highest and best of all that Christ is, that which He imparts to all believers: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6).

4. John says that the One who is life from God was manifested or revealed to us. What purpose did Jesus' life accomplish for us through His earthly ministry? See 1 John 3:5 and 8.

a. What will take place the next time He is revealed? Colossians 3:4 and 1 Peter 5:4

The fellowship between the Father and the Son has its origins in eternity. This fellowship was manifested in terms of *time* through the Incarnation—to the apostles and then to every believer. Everyone that enters this fellowship by believing in Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit, becoming part of God's Family.

5. Read vv. 3–4 again closely. What two positive reasons does John give for writing?

John's desire is that all believers would enjoy the same kind of fellowship he enjoyed. The word used here for fellowship is *koinonia*, signifying a sharing together or having all things in common.

a. John declares the foundation of our fellowship to be based in Christ. Who called us into this fellowship? See 1 Corinthians 1:9.

John is reaffirming the faith of his readers that was being challenged by false teachers. Christians who are in doubt as to the assurance of their salvation will be limited in their *fellowship* with the Father and Son as well as other believers. (We'll be exploring this in- depth throughout our study of 1 John.)

6. Looking from *your* perspective, share why fellowship is both a *privilege* and a *responsibility*.

The way believers treat one another tells the world something about God. Some people prefer to isolate themselves, believing they can live for God alone. The fact is, God created us for fellowship. He desires that we love and care for our believing brothers and sisters by *sharing* in one another's lives. He takes the matter of fellowship very seriously and so should we!

## **SECOND DAY – 1 JOHN 1:5-7**

Read 1 John 1:1-10, focusing on verses 5-7.

John's letter is filled with references to fellowship. The biblical concept of fellowship involves more than a conversation at church or the sharing of a meal together. The Bible speaks of it as a spiritual oneness, a deep sharing of life's concerns. It is a partnering together for a common cause. This kind of genuine fellowship—*koinonia*—can only be based upon maintaining a right heart before God.

1. What message does John convey about God in verse 5?

Since God is light, He is perfect and holy. He is the only one who can lead people out of the darkness of sin. In order to more fully appreciate what God has done in granting us fellowship with Him, let's take a closer look at the contrast between darkness and light in Scripture. Look up the verses below and in a word or two note what you glean. Think carefully during this exercise about what happens to a believer during the process of turning from darkness to light.

a. Acts 26:18

b. Romans 13:12–14

c. 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 6

d. Ephesians 6:12; and 5:8–11

e. 1 John 2:8–10

2. Several places in John's Gospel, Jesus speaks of being the *Light of the world*. Read John 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36 and 46.

a. What do you learn about the power of light from these verses?

b. What does Jesus declare about those who believe in Him?

c. Summarize the effects of the Light of Truth upon *your own* life.

Jesus promised that whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. Light then is an illustration to us of truth, knowledge, and righteousness; while darkness is a picture of falsehood, ignorance, and unrighteousness or sin. Those who claim to follow the Son cannot live in spiritual darkness; they must live in the light of God's presence, continually illuminated by the truth: *"If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth"* (1 John 1:6).

1. Personal: Here's your personal "self-help" list. Look at it to help you determine how far you've come in your own process. Briefly share your thoughts.

- Are you in close daily communion with God?
- Do you have a no-tolerance policy for any hypocrisy or sin?
- Is it easy for you to be transparent before the Lord or do you make attempts to conceal things from Him?
- How are you diligently working toward Christ-likeness? 5

### **THIRD DAY – 1 JOHN 1:6-8**

Read 1 John 1:6-8.

Those who walk in the light will occasionally still find that they are sinning. Christians will not reach perfection until Jesus Christ returns and brings us home to be with Him. Our desire to walk in the light will help us to take advantage of the provision God has made for forgiveness through the shed blood of His Son.

1. What does John say about the person who claims to be sinless? v. 8

John was taking direct aim at the claims of the false teachers (1:6 and 1:10) who stated that it was possible for people to be without sin. In making this claim they were, in effect, saying that they did not need the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. John's point is that they are only fooling themselves; they are liars and God's Word is not in them!

2. Christians need to be constantly reminded of a few facts. Look up the following references and finish the thought begun for you . . .

- a. *Sin has no power over Christians*—Romans 6:6–7

- b. *Believers have a new power to say 'no' to temptation*—1 Corinthians 10:13

- c. *Christians have the power to say 'yes' to righteous living*—Romans 6:11–14



#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 JOHN 1:9-10**

Read 1 John 1:9-10.

As God's children, we are not to deny sin, but rather to *confess* it. God has graciously provided the answer to our dilemma: "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (v. 9).

1. Use verse 9 as a word exercise to explore the breadth and depth of this week's memory verse. Using the resources you have on hand, define each of the following words:
  - a. *Confess* —
  - b. *Sins* —
  - c. *Faithful* —
  - d. *Just* —
  - e. *Forgive* —
  - f. *Cleanse* —
  - g. *Unrighteousness* —

Some people may be inclined to question that if Christ has forgiven all of their sins, then why do they need to continue confessing? Remember that John is speaking here about our *fellowship*—not our *relationship*—with the Father. The moment a person repents and believes in the name of Jesus Christ as their Savior, they become God's child, forever adopted into His family. There is nothing they could do no matter how extreme that would cause Him to "un-adopt" that individual. However, a disobedient child cannot expect to have close intimate fellowship with God the Father.

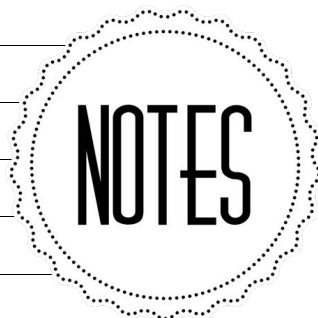
To *confess* our sin means to *agree with God* about it and to acknowledge the wrong to Him, determining not to let it happen again. By refusing to admit that sin exists, we call Him a liar and cheat ourselves out of the possibility of fellowship with Him. Confession is also necessary to ensure continued fellowship with others in the body of Christ.

Remember that the moment a person becomes a believer, he or she is unconditionally saved from the condemnation of sin and conditionally saved from the power of sin. This means that the VICTORY you have over sin's daily lure is *conditional*—there is something *you* must do. It is conditional in direct proportion to your *obedience* to Christ and your willingness to *confess*—agree with God—whenever you miss the mark! How wonderful to have the absolute scriptural assurance that whenever you confess—He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse. Hallelujah and Amen!

2. Personal: What have *you* learned so far about confession that will help you maintain a close walk with God?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing notes.





"But whoever keeps  
His word, truly

THE LOVE OF GOD

is perfected  
in Him.

BY THIS WE KNOW THAT

we are in Him."

1 John 2:5



## Lesson 10 - 1 John 2:1-29

The opening verses of 1 John 2 are the conclusion to John's statements in chapter 1 about fellowship with God and one another. Previously, we learned that it is through Jesus Christ that we have salvation and fellowship with God. We're also learning that walking in the light with Him enables us not to sin; when we do sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous—who intercedes on our behalf. Maintaining a right heart before Him qualifies us for true fellowship with the brethren.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him." 1 John 2:5*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 JOHN 2:1-6**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 2:1–29.

After focusing much of his attention on refuting the false teachers, John now turns to warmly address the Christians. At the time of this writing, John was nearing one hundred years of age. This elder father of the faith had spent nearly all his life in ministry, becoming revered by all those he considered his spiritual children.

His transition to addressing the believers begins in verse one with the words, *"My little children,"* meaning *my born ones*. It was a term of loving affection used by a teacher to address his disciples.

1. There are 7 instances in the Book of 1 John where he uses the words *"My little children."* In several instances, John uses these words to convey his love as he prefaces a hard word to the believers. Look up each reference containing the words *"my little children"* in John's epistle and note the important message he wanted to convey to the church.
  - a. 2:1
  - b. 2:12
  - c. 2:28
  - d. 3:7
  - e. 3:18
  - f. 4:4
  - g. 5:21

We're discovering that the beginning point of fellowship with God and other Christians is the understanding that we need to walk in the light rather than in the darkness. As God's children, when we choose to sin and we confess it, God is willing to forgive. We *need not* sin but, when we do, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ His Son.

## 2. What qualifies Jesus to be our Advocate? v. 2

John is attempting to correct the perception in the minds of his readers who claim to know God but make no effort to obey Him. *"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation"* (Hebrews 9:28).

## 3. How can a person be certain whether or not they're a believer? v. 3

- a. What about the person who professes to know Christ but doesn't obey Him—is it possible for that one to belong to the family of God? v. 4

It is only by taking God's commands seriously and keeping them that we can have absolute assurance we know and belong to Him.

4. What is the litmus test of a person's obedience to God? v. 5

The word *perfected* (v. 5) does not refer to a state of perfection as we understand it, but is better translated as *made complete* or *become mature*. In verse 6, John states that the person who says he abides in Christ ought also to walk as *He walked*. In other words, if we're going to wear the title "Christian," we must do more than just *talk the talk*; we must also be willing to *walk the walk*.

What has John taught us so far? As a recap, go back and examine the 5 "If we" statements in your reading of 1 John. Summarize John's point in each one below.

a. "If we say. . ." (1:6, 8,10)

b. "If we walk. . ." (1:7)

c. "If we sin. . ." (2:1)

d. "If we confess. . ." (1:9)

e. "If we keep. . ." (2:3–5)

5. Personal: Your life's behavior tells the world what *you* believe. Think about it . . . are you more at ease to *talk the talk* or do you welcome the challenge to *walk the walk*? Please explain.

6. In your study today, what has convinced you that you do indeed belong to God?

## **SECOND DAY – 1 JOHN 2:7-11**

Read 1 John 2:7–11 for review.

John had just finished telling his readers that they should walk as Jesus walked—by obeying God. John will now reveal a second way to discern a true believer—whether or not they love as Jesus loved. John states clearly that those who claim to walk in the light while hating their believing brother or sister are really walking in the darkness. The key to walking in the light is: LOVE! Unless believers learn to love one another, they will not be able to grow spiritually.

For the Jews, the command to love others is an old one, dating all the way back to God's covenant with the nation of Israel, when He set them apart as His chosen people. The new commandment was given by Jesus so that the world would be able to tell His people apart from others.

1. How was the old commandment stated in Leviticus 19:18b?
  - a. Restate the way Jesus issued the new commandment in John 13:34–35. Those who followed His command were considered what?

John knew he wasn't writing a new commandment (v.7), as the command to love one another was the same message that was heard all the way back to the Old Testament. What made it new was that Jesus interpreted it in a new way. Those who believed in Jesus had *their hearts changed* by His love. He became the motivating factor for Christians to love one another. The Indwelling Holy Spirit makes it a reality!

2. In whom is the truth of this command made visible? v. 8
  - a. Personal: Are you able to see yourself loving others the way Christ loves you?



In the remainder of the chapter, John continues to highlight the contrasts of light and darkness, love and hate, God and the world.

3. What does John say about the person who claims to be in the light, while at the same time hating their brother or sister? v. 9
  - a. In contrast to verse 9, what act reveals true faith? What benefit results? v. 10
  - b. What does John say keeps a person from loving others? v. 11
4. Think for a moment about what it is like to turn off the light switch and walk around in a dark room. What does it do to your overall perspective and sense of direction? Are you more prone to trip and fall or perhaps cause someone else to? Now take it a step further and apply this same lesson spiritually. What would happen to your spiritual perspective and sense of direction if you were to deliberately cut yourself off from the light of truth? What affect would the darkness potentially have over you? Please explain your thoughts.

John was most likely referring here to the false teachers and their followers who were rejecting the Christians leaving their assembly. But what happens if you find yourself seriously disliking another believer who fellowships in the same church as you every Sunday? Does it mean that you are not a true believer after all? No! John's words are not referring to disliking a Christian brother or sister in the faith who may be disagreeable. There will always be a few people in the church who are not to our liking. Rather, he is referring to those who respond to the unlikable and disagreeable by ignoring or ostracizing them—perhaps even turning their backs on them as if they were enemies—that isn't how God's love works. God's love working in and through us is not something *we feel emotionally* but a *choice we make deliberately to love as Jesus loved*. If our heart is right with Him, He enables us to love the unlovable. After all, each one of us was at one time or another in that same category with Him!

### **THIRD DAY – 1 JOHN 2:12-17**

Read 1 John 2:12-17.

Verses 12–14 are difficult to understand. In them John addresses three different groups of readers: little children, fathers, and young men. There is disagreement as to whether these divisions represent chronological age or degrees of spiritual maturity. Some Bible scholars believe that the three terms refer to all the readers, and that whatever is attributed to each category is intended for all—since they had all experienced salvation, spiritual warfare, and close fellowship with God. Based on John’s previous use of the term *little children*, it is most likely that he was referring to everyone in the church. The distinction, then, would be to use the three terms for emphasis.

1. Finish the statements below as to why John wrote to each group (vv.12–14). Take it a step further and consider the questions that follow each statement to better help you understand what John is saying to each one.

***He wrote to little children because . . .***

- What basic fact would *little children* comprehend about their faith?

***He wrote to fathers because . . .***

- What greater wisdom would *fathers* possess because they had a mature relationship with God?

***He wrote to young men because . . .***

- What quality would *young men* possess that would enable them to be victorious over their enemy?
- Verse 14 reveals the *key* to remaining strong and living victoriously—what is it?

John is attempting to reassure Christians of their salvation and growth in Christ. Next he will warn them about the dangers of loving the world and listening to false teaching. He tells them that not only are believers to love God and fellow believers, he also tells them what they are not to love—the world. John is not referring here to God’s creation—that which reveals His glory and which He declared as good. He is also not referring to the fact that God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for it (John 3:16). The term for *world* John uses here actually refers to the realm of Satan’s influence—those who are under his authority and who hate God as a result.

2. Is it possible to love the world and love God at the same time? v. 15 (See James 4:4 for further insight into why this is so.)

a. Verse 16 is a summation of all sin that is present in the world. Name the three categories into which every sin known to mankind falls.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Once again, John makes a sharp contrast: God and the world are such opposites that it is impossible to love both at the same time—they are mutually exclusive. But since believers cannot remove themselves from the world, we must understand that we live in the middle of a war zone. There will always be an ongoing battle on earth between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. One day Satan’s kingdom will be destroyed and his rule will come to an end. In the meantime, our mission as believers is to learn to be *in the world* but *not of the world*!

b. What is happening to this present world? v. 17 What about the one who does the will of God? What does John mean by this?

The world’s values, which seem so appealing, are in direct opposition to God. As believers, when we love the world, we are turning away from God’s love to a *substitute*, and the world is full of substitutes! Anything in our lives that keeps us from enjoying God’s love and doing His will is of the world and not of God. It is foolish to hold tightly to something that is passing away. God’s missionary Jim Elliot once said: “*He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*” Remember that isolation from God’s people (even the difficult ones) makes it very easy for believers to become worldly. We need each other—we belong to each other—we depend on each other to live in this world and to enjoy the next!

## **FOURTH DAY – 1 JOHN 2:18-28**

Read verses 18-28 for review.

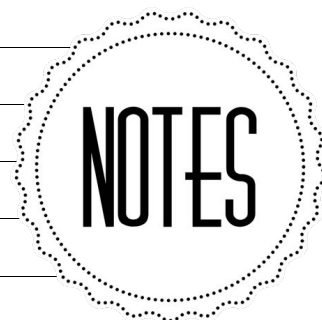
In the remaining verses of chapter 2, John warns about the coming of the Antichrist, and that many antichrists are already here; meaning the last hour before the Lord's return has already begun.

1. What is the evidence that proves this? v. 19
  - a. What does John have to say about the spirit of antichrist? vv. 22–23
2. John states in verses 20–21 that every believer has an anointing from the Holy Spirit. What does this anointing ensure?
  - b. Every believer can be confident of this anointing—why? v. 27 What is the promise here for *you*?
3. John writes (v. 26) to warn all believers about those who will try to deceive them. But what are the promises for the believers who continue to *abide in Him*? vv. 24–25
4. What last piece of advice does John give in this chapter to encourage his readers? vv. 28–29 What does this mean to you personally?

*Abiding—remaining in Him*—results in eternal life and the assurance now that *you* may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming! Doing the right thing does not *make* you a Christian—it only proves that you are one!

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.





my  
little children,  
let us not  
love in word  
or in tongue,  
but in deed  
and in  
truth."

1 John 3:18



## Lesson 11 - 1 John 3:1-24

When was the last time that you remember pausing to think about God's great love for you? John is filled with wonder as he contemplates the love of God in making us His children. At the time this epistle was written, the church was being influenced by false teachers (Gnostics) who believed they could sin without consequence and their spirits remain untainted by evil. They claimed to know God but they hated their fellow believers who did not agree with them. John wrote to refute their openly sinful lifestyle and to assure all true believers that they must practice what is right if they claim to be Christian.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1 John 3:18*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to put it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 JOHN 3:1-3**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 3:1–24.

The Greek word for *children* is a reference to spiritual birth. John is calling attention to the fact that God has *given birth* to believers—they are His own children. To be called *children of God* is not merely to assume a title; it is rather an absolute fact of life. In this chapter, John wants all believers to have confident assurance of their position in God's family.

1. Think about it: What does it mean to *you* to be a child of God?

a. How did you come to be His child? See John 1:9–12; John 3:3; and 1 Peter 1:23.

b. How does the “world” feel about the child of God? v. 1

2. The word “know” in vv.1–2 speaks of *acceptance*. John makes a similar statement about Jesus in John 1:10–11. What is his point?

The failure to recognize Jesus was due to the fact that people didn’t accept Him for all that He is. Since the world rejects God, should we really be surprised when it also rejects us—His offspring?

3. As His child, what is God’s ultimate goal for you? v. 2

a. How should this revelation affect your life while here on earth?

Do you have the hope John is talking about in his letter? Then for you, Christian, Heaven is not just a destination, it is a motivation to become *as Jesus is*! Since you enjoy the privilege of the family relationship with God, you must also bear the responsibility of exhibiting the character of God in your everyday life. The word *hope* (v. 3) means the confident expectation of future blessings. Since you have the hope of one day seeing Christ and becoming like Him, you must also desire to purify yourself from the presence of all sin in your life.

4. Look up the word *purify* (v. 3) and write a practical definition based upon its application to your life.



John uses the present tense in speaking of Jesus: “*He is pure*” (v. 3); “*He is righteous*” (v. 7). He remains these things today because He is eternal and He is opposed to sin and its devastating effect upon His children.

The believer’s position is that of a child of God—nothing less—period! But as His child, do you fully realize the meaning behind that great truth? The Apostle Paul stated that the moment we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, the veil of unbelief that previously blinded our hearts to the truth is lifted and taken away and we see Him for who He is (2 Corinthians 3:14–18). Paul also says that the process of transformation here on earth is a slow one and we will only fully comprehend once we reach Heaven.

5. Take a moment to consider the following from your perspective . . .

- Briefly relate when and how you met Jesus Christ for the very first time.
- Since then, are you surprised when the “world” does not accept you for being a Christian?
- As Jesus continues to reveal Himself to you through His Word, do you continue to see more of Him manifested in your daily life? Give an example.
- Be encouraged Christian! John states that one day ***you will be like Jesus!*** Right now, as the Holy Spirit works in and through your life, would you say that you are working *with God* or *resisting Him*?

## **SECOND DAY – 1 JOHN 3:4-10**

Read verses 4-10 for review.

Verses 4–10 are a challenge for the believer to interpret and make application in daily life. The Bible does not give one overall definition for sin, but here it states that *sin is lawlessness*. Scripture tells us that lawlessness is characteristic of the spirit of Antichrist: “*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and then man of lawlessness [sin] is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God . . .*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3- 4).

1. Look up the following references that represent the various facets of sin and briefly note what you learn . . .
  - a. Proverbs 4:19
  - b. Romans 14:23b
  - c. James 4:17
  - d. 1 John 5:17a

The “man of lawlessness” does not reign in the believer’s life, but each child of God must deal with known sin the same way God dealt with it—by putting it to death!

2. Finish the sentences contained in the chart below to get a bigger picture of sin:

v. 4: *Whoever commits sin*

v. 4: *And sin is*

v. 5: *Christ was manifested*

v. 6: *The conclusion is*

v. 8: *He that commits sin*

v. 8: *The origin of sin is*

v. 8: *The Son of God was manifested*

v. 9: *The conclusion is*

John asserts (v. 9) that those who have been born into God's family do not sin because God's life (seed) is in them. They cannot keep on sinning because they have been born of God. John's intent is to convey that the believer can no longer choose to *habitually*, or *continually* live in sin—they do not make a practice of it. They do not desire to live in that way; in fact, they renounce it because it is incompatible with their new nature in Christ. Sin is still active and, at times the believer will give in to it, but sin no longer has dominion or control, which is why the Christian is constantly fighting against it! In other words, your Christian walk is daily lived out on a spiritual battleground. The real question is: *who will win your heart today. . .tomorrow. . .next week?*

Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only thing that allowed God to forgive the sinner. It also provided the way for Christians to live without living in sin. He came literally to *destroy the works of the devil* (v. 8). The word "destroy" means to *diffuse*, or to *take the power out*. Satan is a defeated foe—meaning he can only have the victory if we let him! Remember that you as a Christian are fighting from the position of VICTORY—Jesus has already won! Will you take a moment to compose a prayer of thanks to Him?

### **THIRD DAY – 1 JOHN 3:10-15**

Read 1 John 3:10-15 for review.

Once again, John points to the message of love, which is the prominent theme of his epistle: "*For this is the message you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another*" (v. 11). Before we ponder the significance of what love is, let's look at what it is not.

1. Refer to vv. 11–13 along with Genesis 4:1–10 to answer the following:
  - a. Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's?
  - b. How does the illustration of Cain's resentment against Able compare with the world's resentment of the believer?
  - c. Personal: Can you cite a recent example of a non-believer resenting you as a person of faith?

2. In verses 14–15, John repeats that it is impossible for love and hate to co-exist in the child of God. To what does John point as evidence of true faith?

a. How does John describe the one who hates his brother?

In the context of these verses, we can conclude that love is the outward manifestation that we have been saved and have passed from death into life.

#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 JOHN 3:16-23**

Read verses 16-23.

1. Who is the believer's supreme example of love? v. 16

a. John's illustration of Jesus reveals that true love is sacrificial. In what ways should our love be expressed? What is the result when we do? vv. 17–19

When asked to lay one's life down for our brethren, we should be willing. The true test of being a Christian is our willingness to sacrifice on behalf of our brothers and sisters.

b. Personal: Can you give a practical example of how you are expressing your love in action and in truth?

God knows that we love imperfectly and that we do not always rise to His standard. We may not be there for someone in need; we may not be willing to love that difficult individual in the body of Christ. We may even begin to listen to Satan's lies about us. If or when we do fall short, we have God's power and peace that keeps us secure in Him. And because He knows all things, He understands our desire to follow His example.

2. If your heart is right with God (1 John 1:9), what blessing is yours? v. 21

a. With this confidence at hand, what can we do? v. 22 (See also John 15:12-16).

Warren Wiersbe says that conscience is the window of the heart that lets in God's truth. When we have confidence toward God, we also have freedom of speech in His presence, resulting in answered prayer and rest for our souls!

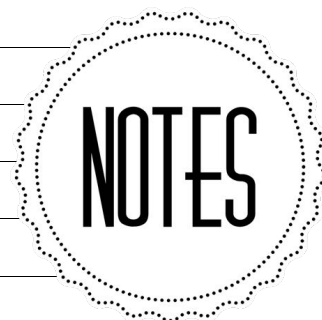
In verse 24, John speaks of the indwelling of Christ made possible by the Holy Spirit. John first heard Jesus speak of Him in the Upper Room Discourse (John 14). In these parting words, Jesus spoke of "another Comforter," the *Parakletos*—*One called alongside*. His Spirit makes it possible for us to know that He abides in us.

3. What fact do you find about the Holy Spirit in John 14:17a, that is similar to John's words here in 3:1? Keep this in mind as you navigate through this temporal world with the Spirit's enabling.

Remember, if there is no sacrifice involved, it isn't Christian love. Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing! Individual acts of sacrificial love have transforming power, so don't ever minimize what you do for another in the name of the Lord. Jesus told His disciples that even a cup of cold water given in His name carries with it a reward!

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.





1 John 4:17  
**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."





## Lesson 12 - 1 John 4:1-21

The beloved Apostle John reminds his readers in chapter four of the critical importance of discerning between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, a warning which still applies today. The world puts forth philosophies and beliefs that seem to make sense but when held up to the truth of God's Word, are shown to be what they are—wrong and dangerous. Christians must learn not to rely on the claims or credentials of other people, but to make it their aim to know God's Word well enough to be able to discern truth from error for themselves.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"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." 1 John 4:17*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 JOHN 4:1-6**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 4:1–21.

Are you in the habit of testing every person you listen to and every message you hear to see if they line up with Scripture? Do your words and actions present an accurate picture of God to others around you? These are some of the issues we will deal with in our lesson this week, as we add to our understanding of what a mature, loving disciple of Christ looks like.

By the time John's letter was written, he was most likely the only remaining eyewitness to the person and work of Jesus in the world. A portion of the second and third generation believers had begun to doubt what they had been taught about Jesus. The influence of the false teachers

was being felt. John makes the point that the responsibility for testing the spirits does not rest on church leaders or theologians, but each individual believer.

1. Why is it so important to try (question) every spirit and teaching we hear? v. 1

a. What is the most important “test” to apply? v. 2

b. What does John say in vv. 2–3 that reiterates his statements in 2:22–23?

2. What does John state about God’s “children” in vv. 4–6?

a. What does he say in these same verses about the false teachers in the world?

b. Why do *you* think a false teacher would be well received by the world?

“. . . *By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*” (v. 6). We can closely inspect a person’s lifestyle and the fruit of their ministry but the most important test must be *what is being taught about the person and work of Jesus Christ!* The ultimate truth test for whether or not a person is speaking for God is his (or her) belief about Jesus Christ. John’s point is that every believer has the responsibility to call into question anyone who rejects the biblical representation of Christ.

Note: John’s use of the pronoun *you* (v. 4), is plural and refers to the community of believers. The used of “them” and “they” are both references to false teachers. John implies here that while every believer must battle the enemy daily, we are not meant to do battle against him alone. There is a greater power available to us in numbers whenever “we” come together, locking our shields for prayer, protection and guidance.

3. The world turns a deaf ear to the things of God. Look up 1 Corinthians 2:12–14 to find out why and note the reason below.

4. The Spirit of God, however, enables the believer to do many things. Briefly note what He does for the believer according to the following:
  - a. John 14:17
  - b. John 14:26
  - c. John 15:26–27
  - d. John 16:13–15

## **SECOND DAY – 1 JOHN 4:7-10**

Read 1 John 4:7-10 for review.

Earlier in his letter (1:5), John described God's nature as light; here in v. 7, John describes Him as *love*. Genuine biblical love finds its true origin in God. It is in Him that believers discover the resource from which to draw the purity, holiness, and joy needed to love others. Unfortunately, we all too often neglect these valuable resources, trying to supplement them instead from the depths of our own imperfect hearts, causing ourselves and others great disappointment.

1. What is the proof of the Christian's spiritual birth and relationship with God? v. 7
  - a. How does this love come into the world? v. 8
  - b. What does a person who does not love other Christians reveal about themselves? v. 8
  - c. What is the proof and purpose of God's love for us? v. 9

2. Verse 10 provides the true definition of love. Finish the verse below by filling in *your own name* where space is provided. (Read it through again with this emphasis.)

*“ . . . This is love: not that \_\_\_\_\_ loved God, but that He loved \_\_\_\_\_ and sent His Son to be the propitiation for \_\_\_\_\_’s sins.”*

- a. Take a moment to pause and ponder the full meaning of what you just read. The essence of verse 10 reveals why God created you, why He cares, and why He allowed His Son to die on the cross for you. Briefly state what this means to you personally.

### **THIRD DAY – 1 JOHN 4:11-21**

Read 1 John 11-21.

1. The phrase “*God is love*” appears so simple on the surface, but behind these words is the Master’s plan of the ages. To help add some clarity to the depth of God’s love, try the exercise below. Read the phrase and the corresponding verses in parenthesis; then pick out a key word that is significant to you. This is completely subjective and will vary in your group but be ready to share and support your answer.

*Because God loves—He gave (4:9)*

My Key Word: \_\_\_\_\_

*Because God loves—He died (4:10)*

My Key Word: \_\_\_\_\_

*Because God loves—He completes (4:12)*

My Key Word: \_\_\_\_\_

*Because God loves—He blesses (4:13, 18)*

My Key Word: \_\_\_\_\_

Being born into God’s family opens up the way for a mutual love relationship—both incoming and out-flowing! “*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*” (v. 11). As we continue taking on our Father’s likeness, we also allow His love to become the motive that compels us to love one another.

Evidently there were false teachers who had left the church, claiming to love God and yet at the same time hating God’s children. In verses 11–12 and 19–21, John reiterates that it is not possible to love God whom they had never seen and, at the same time, despise those belonging to Him. God was present on earth—visibly—in the life of His Son, Jesus Christ. Presently, the Holy Spirit is with God’s children on earth—*visibly*—in the lives of His children. There is evidence of His presence and power each time believers reach out in love.

2. When we do live by God's love, what dual action takes place? v. 12

a. Look up the word *perfected* in several different translations and note your findings.

God never intended for His children to hoard His love for their own enjoyment; He intends for us to give it out and, as we do, His inexhaustible supply of *Agape`* is continually replenished as needed. When He abides in us and we demonstrate our love for one another, His love becomes *perfected—matured* in us. If you have ever wondered why Christians go through difficulties in life, part of the reason is because God wants to mature our love to the point that it becomes second nature to us. Love is not something for us to keep close—it must overflow to others in order to be effective!

b. What reason does John give as to why we love God and others? v. 19

c. Personal: On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being best, how much are you visibly showing your love for God and others *by your actions*?

#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 JOHN 4:11-21 (continued)**

Reread 1 John 4:11–18 for review.

Following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the disciples experienced the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit, making it possible for them and every believer thereafter to know what it means to abide—to *live in God* and have *God live in them*. “*We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit*” (v.13). The Holy Spirit is the gift who enables believers to trust in their relationship with God.

1. What other reason does John give for believers trusting in the message they have heard? v. 14

The “we” referred to here pertains to the apostles and other eyewitnesses of the Lord's life on earth.

- a. What is the test that proves a person's belief genuine? And what is the evidence of that profession of faith? v. 15

In verse 16, the pronoun “we” refers not to the apostles, but to John and his readers. He says that believers have known by experience and therefore trust in the love of God.

- 2. As believers trust in that love daily, what understanding do they gain? v. 16b

- a. Personal: Share one of the ways *you* personally experienced God's love abiding in you this past week.

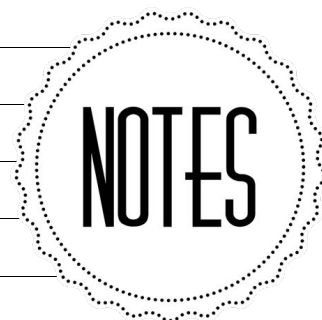
- b. What kind of love is produced by this mutual indwelling love of God? v. 17

When we have boldness we do not fear. Love and fear cannot co-exist; one will automatically exclude the other. Since fear has to do with punishment and since Jesus Christ took the believer's punishment upon Himself, any fear in the believer's life has to do with a lack of confidence in God's provision. Believers do not need to be afraid of the future or of impending judgment because God's love has set them free to love Him and others openly. The future is your friend when Jesus is your Lord!

- c. Personal: Have you come to terms with how much God loves you? Your love for Him will be reflected in your love for others. As you continue to let your love overflow, what great truth can you claim in Matthew 25:37–40?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.



1 John 2:19

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

that you MAY CONTINUE

to believe

in the name of the Son of God."





## Lesson 13 - 1 John 5:1-21

If you were composing a letter to leave behind as a guide to help others know and understand what really matters, you would choose your words very carefully. Neatly tucked inside the closing chapter of John's epistle we find the words that were most important to him—those containing the key to abundance here and now as well as in the hereafter: *begotten, overcome, victory, eternal life, assurance, confidence, answered prayer and freedom*—all words that convey a sense of permanence. John's desire at the end of his life was to leave those who would follow after him a solid foundation on which to build and rest their faith in God.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"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." 1 John 5:13*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 1 JOHN 5:1-5**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 5:1–21.

John has spelled out clearly how to recognize the characteristics that are the basis for determining whether or not someone is a true Christian.

Let's briefly recap by taking a look back at what the chapters in 1 John previously taught us about the birthmarks of a believer.

1. Using the references below, finish the following: *Everyone who is born of God . . .*
  - a. 2:29 –
  - b. 3:9 –
  - c. 4:7–
  
2. Here in chapter 5, John completes the picture, brushing on the finishing strokes by explaining how to be victorious in our Christian faith. From the verses below, how does John complete his thought pattern about *everyone who is born of God*?
  - a. 5:1 –
  - b. 5:4 –
  - c. 5:18 –
  
3. According to John's statements here in chapter 5, how do we know that we love God's children? v. 2
  - a. What is the true test of a believer's love for God? v. 3
  
  - b. Look up the definition of the word *burdensome*. What does John mean when he says that God's commandments are not burdensome? v. 3
  
  - c. Look back to the statements made about this by Jesus in the Upper Room in John 14:15 and 21. What, again, is the promise for the one who obeys Him?

John, like Jesus, inseparably linked *love* together with *obedience*. John adds the emphasis that obedience to God is possible because His commands are not a burden to those that love Him.

4. Realizing that your love for God is directly equivalent to the degree of your obedience to Him, how much would you say that you love Him right now? Please share your thoughts.

5. Who does John say will win the battle against the world? vv. 4–5

a. In John 16:33, what does John add that is key to our ability to overcome?

Though the ultimate battle has been won *in Christ*, daily each conflict must be lived out on the battlefield! The way to overcome and claim victory is by renewing your faith through the Holy Spirit's power indwelling you. Will you do it now and praise Him for making it possible for you to overcome?

## **SECOND DAY – 1 JOHN 5:6-12**

Read 1 John 5:6–12 for review.

The Apostle John understood that a wrong interpretation of the truth would have lasting negative consequences for the believers. His goal was to help them learn to discern and live for that which is based upon truth. The singular thread that wove together John's letter was the truth that eternal life is in Jesus Christ alone. *"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"* (v. 6).

1. Who are the three who bear witness to this in heaven? These three are one. v. 7

2. Who are the three who bear witness on earth? These three agree as one. v. 8

These verses have to do with three phases of Jesus' life when He was manifested as the Son of God in Human form: at His baptism (*the water*), His death (*the blood*), and His resurrection (*the Spirit*). Each of these testified to the fact that the man Jesus was the divine Son of God.

John makes the point (v. 9) that because the people of his day believed human testimony when it was validated by two or three witnesses, then surely they could believe the three-fold witness of God, since He was behind all three. Together they testified that Jesus is the Christ.

3. In the Gospel of John, Jesus responded to those who questioned Him by indicating He had *five* very reliable witnesses; who or what were they in each of the following verses?
  - a. John 5:31–32, and 37
  - b. John 5:33–35
  - c. John 5:36
  - d. John 5:39
4. According to 1 John 5:10, what does John declare about the one who believes in the Son of God?
  - a. What about those who do not believe?
  - b. What truth does John make clear for everyone in verse 12?

The false teachers John wrote to the believers about did not believe *that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son*. This truth is not only a future hope, but also a present reality for every believer. We need not wait for it—we need not work for it; it is rather a gift from God that can be fully experienced NOW! Have you thanked Him lately for His priceless indescribable gift?

### **THIRD DAY – 1 JOHN 5:13-21**

Read 1 John 5:13-21.

The last nine verses of John's wonderful letter are meant to be a summary of the text and an encouragement to all believers to apply what they have read and believed.

1. To whom does John write and for what purpose? v. 13
2. What is the sweet confidence that we as believers have in approaching God? v. 14
  - a. If we are sure that He hears us, what are we promised? v. 15

The High Priest of the Old Testament was allowed once a year to enter the Holy of Holies on behalf of God's people. Our High Priest—Jesus Christ—tore down the veil separating God from man and is seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession on our behalf.

3. Read Hebrews 4:14–16 through as you think about prayer.
  - a. How does God want you to approach Him in prayer?
  - b. What do these verses tell you about your Lord? How would this enable Him to understand *your* petitions?
  - c. Personal: Do *you* have the kind of confidence the writer of Hebrews talked about and that John writes about here in 5:14–15? (Please personalize it.)

Praying according to God's will is the key to receiving what we ask of Him. It is important to discuss the matter with Him and to know what the Scriptures say about His will. Most of God's will for our lives is already written on the pages of the Bible. By learning to use His Word to formulate our requests and praying the promises back to Him, we are praying in a way that honors Him, assuring us of our petitions.

Verses 16–17 present an example of the kind of prayer God will answer. Because believers are called to love, we are also called to pray! When we see a Christian brother or sister in sin, we should pray and, as the Lord leads, confront them about their sin. The question is in the

difference between sinning in a way that leads to death and sinning in a way that does not. There are differing opinions as to what John's intended meaning is here; therefore, we must examine it in the context of the entire letter. John was writing to the believers to refute the false teachers who denied Jesus' deity and at the same time lived in habitual sin themselves. Since they were living in a continual state of rebellion against God, and at the same time denying who Jesus Christ was, their unrepentant attitude would keep them in a place that was beyond the reach of prayer. We are not called to judge others but to pray for them, and to pray in such a way that God would hear from heaven and answer! The prayer of a righteous person avails much (James 5:16).

4. What does the one born of God *do*—and *not do*? v. 18

The person who makes the deliberate choice *not* to continue in sin is safe—Jesus keeps that one safe. The enemy cannot take away his/her salvation; they are secure in God's grace!

#### **FOURTH DAY – 1 JOHN 5 (Review)**

John earlier wrote his Gospel in order that his readers would come to believe in Jesus Christ (John 20:31). He wrote this epistle so that believers might *know* and have assurance of their salvation. Although we may doubt and even falter due to lifestyle choices or our circumstances, John assures us all that we do not need to worry about our salvation! "*These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life*" (v. 13).

1. In addition to *knowing* we have eternal life, there are six other instances in chapter 5 where John uses the assuring words "we know." Find all six and finish the statements (taken from the NKJV).
  - a. *We know that we love the children of God when* (v. 2)
  - b. *We know that if He hears us* (v. 15)
  - c. *We know that whoever is born of God* (v. 18)
  - d. *We know that we are of God* (v. 19)

e. *We know that the Son of God has come* (v. 20)

f. *We know Him who* (v. 20)

2. Personal: What have you learned through your study that has increased your confidence level in your walk with God? How has this changed your life?

In one final attempt to refute false teaching and rescue those who might be prone to receive it, John closes his letter with an affectionate plea: *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"* (v. 21). It is his last word, his heartfelt entreaty to every believer: keep yourself from anything that would threaten to take God's place in your heart—anything that vies for your attention and affection. Even aged believers can be tempted, as the old hymn says:

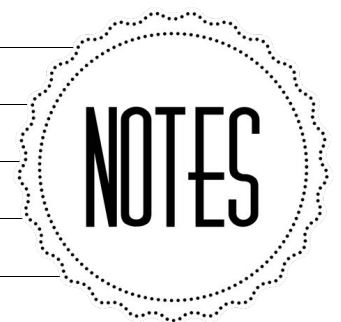
*"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love."*

Our heartfelt prayer should be:

*"Take my heart, Lord, take and seal it. Seal it for Thy courts above."*

Will *you* make the words of this old song your prayer today?

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?









this is  
**LOVE**

that we walk according to  
**HIS COMMANDMENTS**

this is the commandment  
that as you have heard from  
<sup>the</sup> beginning, you should

**WALK**  
in it



## Lesson 14 - 2 John

The epistle or letter that has come to be known as 2 John begins by identifying the author simply as “The Elder”. As you read through the letter, you will find many similarities in vocabulary and style to the gospel of John. It is also believed that although many of the disciples and church leaders were called elders, John being the oldest remaining disciple was called “The Elder”. John was often referred to in his early years as a “Son of Thunder”, but he loved to refer to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. Truly, the emphasis of John’s gospel and his three letters was love. Tradition holds that John spent most of his later years in Ephesus where it is believed he wrote this second epistle around 90 A.D. How it must have saddened John to write the words of Christ in Revelation 2:1-4 to his old church, declaring that they had lost their first love.

### **Memory Verse:**

*“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.” 2 John 1:6*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 2 JOHN 1:1-3**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read all of 2 John.

1. To whom is this letter written?

There are two opinions as to who the elect lady and her children are. Figuratively, the elect lady may refer to a local church and her children may refer to members of that church. Literally, the elect lady may be an unnamed individual. A possible Greek translation of the phrase elect lady is the lady Electa. Electa was the name of a Christian friend of John's, a mother who was well known in her community, whose sister's children were probably residents of Ephesus.

However, the general consensus is that this letter was sent to a group of believers, described as elect to remind them (and all Christians) of the blessed calling of being chosen and set apart from the world for a holy purpose. Whether the letter was written to a specific church or to an individual, we know it was written to Christians and thus it would be profitable for us to glean from John's instructions and warnings.

2. What were some of John's purposes for writing this letter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. The key word **truth** is used four times in this section. Record what John wrote about truth in verses 1-3.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Look up the following verses and record the insights you gained about Biblical truth:
  - John 1:17
  
  - John 8:32
  
  - John 14:6
  
  - Galatians 2:14
  
  - Ephesians 1:13
  
  - 1 Thessalonians 2:13

5. Verse 2 states: *“because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever”*. List some of the benefits of “truth which abides”:

- John 15:7
- 1 John 2:14
- 1 Peter 1:23

6. Personal: Answer one of the following....

How has the truth abiding in you caused you to love truth?

How has the Truth (Jesus) abiding in you caused you to love the Truth?

*The Cross is God's truth about us, and therefore it is the only power which can make us truthful. When we know the Cross, we are no longer afraid of the truth. - D. Bonhoeffer*

## **SECOND DAY – 2 JOHN 2:4-6**

Read verses 4-6 for review.

1. **Love** is a key word in this paragraph division. What is written about love?

2. Verses 4-6 reiterate John's statements in 1 John regarding love. What further truths does 1 John reveal about walking in the commandment to love?

- 1 John 2:5
- 1 John 2:10
- 1 John 2:15
- 1 John 3:14
- 1 John 3:16
- 1 John 4:7
- 1 John 4:19

3. How would walking in love be a deterrent to falling prey to deceivers?

### **THIRD DAY – 2 JOHN 1:7-11**

Read 2 John verses 7-11.

1. This paragraph division addresses the problem of deceivers. Record what John wrote about these deceivers.

2. According to verse 9, what makes the difference between a *deceiver* and one who *has both the Father and the Son*?
  - a. Describe “abiding in the doctrine of Christ”.
3. Personal: *Abiding in the doctrine of Christ* suggests there are boundaries set for us to live within. Does this seem confining to you or liberating? Why?
4. The philosophy of the world today is *tolerance*. Christians are accused of being narrow minded and judgmental. Read John’s instructions regarding deceivers in verses 10 and 11. Why do you think John taking such a strong stance is necessary?

#### **FOURTH DAY – 2 JOHN 1:12-13**

Read 2 John 12-13.

1. Describe John’s heart for the recipients of this letter using verses 1, 12, and 13.
  - a. How does his expression of love and concern reflect a life that walks what he has written?

2. Scan the epistle of 2 John. Using the key word *abide*, summarize the book of 2 John as it could be divided into two sections.

Verses 1-6: Abide in \_\_\_\_\_.

Verses 7-13: Do not abide with \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Personal: Look up the definition of the word *abide* and describe what it means to you personally to abide in truth and love.

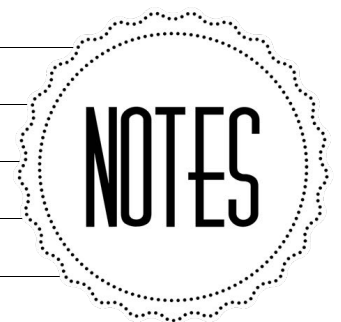
4. How has the study of this book impressed you with the importance of who you abide with?

*The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction.*

*- Proverbs 19:23*

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?





3 john 1:4

i have

NO GREATER Joy

than to

hear that ~~my~~ children

WALK IN

truth



## **Lesson 15 - 3 John**

John, the apostle of love, knew the importance of fellowship. First John emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God through abiding in Christ; in Second John he forbids fellowship with those who do not abide in the teachings of Christ, and in Third John he encourages fellowship with those who do abide in the teachings of Christ. True fellowship is a result of sharing the common bond provided through Christ, abiding in Him, and walking according to His teachings.

Third John, as written in the original Greek, is the shortest book of the Bible. Its subjects are as vital today as they were when John wrote it from Ephesus in approximately 90 A.D. As you read this letter, note its relevancy to the church today. May it encourage you to live as those John commended in the letter.

### ***Memory Verse:***

*"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 1:4*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 3 JOHN 1:1-2**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer. Read 3 John in its entirety.

1. To whom is this letter written?

Gaius was one of the most commonly used names of the Roman Empire. Other men referred to by this name appeared in the New Testament four times. Little is known about the recipient of this letter. There is no reference to Gaius being a pastor or elder in the church. Many regard him as an active lay member and personal friend of John's.

2. What was John's desire for Gaius according to verse 2?
  - a. Describe a *prosperous soul*:
3. As Christians, it is important that we care about one another's *spiritual* well-being as well as one another's *emotional* and *physical* health. How is caring about each one of these aspects an expression of love?
4. Physical health is a result of nutrition, exercise, proper rest – a disciplined order of a balanced life. What are the components of good, spiritual health?
5. Personal: If your physical health was in the same state as your spiritual health, what condition would you be in physically?

## **SECOND DAY – 3 JOHN 1:1-6, 12**

Read 3 John for review.

1. John commended both Gaius and Demetrius in this letter. What similar comment did he make about both of them? (see verses 3 and 12)
2. A person's testimony or reputation speaks volumes about not only himself, but about the church and the gospel. How would you explain the importance of a good testimony or reputation to another Christian whose life was not producing good works? Can you support your answer with Scripture?

3. Record John's response to the fact that Gaius was walking in truth. v. 4

- a. Read I Thessalonians 2:11. Like John, Paul had a father's heart for Christians in his care. Summarize this kind of loving care as expressed in the following verses: Ephesians 1:15,16; Philippians 1:4; I Thessalonians 2:19,20 and 3:6-9.

*If knowing his children are walking in truth causes a human shepherd to rejoice, how much do you think it means to our Heavenly Shepherd?*

4. Personal: Describe a lifestyle of walking in truth.

What are some of the temptations that can prevent a Christian from walking in truth?

What can we do to combat these temptations?

### **THIRD DAY – 3 JOHN 1:5-8**

Read 3 John 1:5-8.

In this paragraph division John praises Gaius for his hospitality. At the time of this writing, it is believed that John would send out missionaries to preach in many different cities. Their room and board was typically provided by those in the church. The strangers which John referred to in verse 5 were probably these traveling ministers. These men carried with them letters of recommendation from their home churches or the disciples and had returned to John bearing witness of Gaius' care.

1. What do the following verses say about showing and giving hospitality? (If you can, look them up in different translations.)
  - a. Romans 12:13
  - b. I Timothy 5:10
  - c. Hebrews 13:2
  - d. 1 Peter 4:9
2. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, included a recommendation for Phoebe, a Christian sister who had helped others, including Paul. *“That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”* (Romans 16:2) There are many ways to “receive someone in the Lord”. How would you describe hospitality as it relates to the church today?

3. Personal: What is your attitude towards hospitality? Are you able to share your home, or a meal, with others “cheerfully”? If hospitality comes easy to you, what advice or word of encouragement would you give to someone who struggles in this area?

4. What reason does John give in verse 8 for receiving these traveling teachers?

When we are obedient to welcome our brothers and sisters in the Lord, and support them as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, we are actually partnering with them in the ministry!

#### **FOURTH DAY – 3 JOHN 1:9-12**

Read 3 John in its entirety for review.

In this paragraph division, John moves from *commending* to *reproving*.

1. Describe Diotrephes' behavior towards, what did he not do? v. 9

a. Why?

2. Choose one of the following Scriptures and describe how it relates to *loving the preeminence* among men: Matthew 20:20-28; Matthew 23:4-8 or Luke 22:24-27.

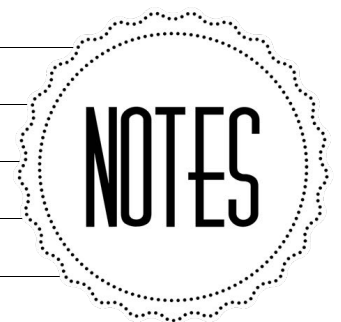
3. Rather than loving preeminence what should our behavior be like?
  - Romans 12:10
  - Philippians 2:3-5
  - Titus 1:7
4. In addition to not receiving these teachers, what else was Diotrephes doing? v. 10
5. In light of this behavior, what was John's exhortation to the believers? v. 11
6. Personal: In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul reminds us that "bad company corrupts good character" (NLT). Think about the people you spend the most time with, these are the people who will influence you the most – what kind of influence are they having on your character? In other words, are you imitating what is evil, or what is good?


*"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."*  
*1 Corinthians 11:1*

7. As John closes this letter in verses 13-14, you can sense his love for these believers and his desire for fellowship with them. In our day and age when many people experience loneliness and yet not many are willing to step out of their comfort zone and invest in the lives of others, it would help us to remember that our bond of unity does not lie our physical similarities or shared experiences.... what is it that unites us? See 1 John 1:7.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?







Beloved,  
while I was very diligent to  
write to you concerning our  
common salvation I found  
it necessary to write to you  
exhorting you to

contend

EARNESTLY

for  
the faith

which was once for  
all delivered to the  
saints. Jude 1:3



## Lesson 16 - Jude

The book of Jude has been referred to as “a call to arms”. Like many of the letters of the New Testament, Jude was written to warn believers of false teachers who had crept into the church unnoticed. However, this book is not simply a warning; it is a call to contend for the faith, to fight for the truths of God’s Word. Along with the challenge to contend, Jude is a beautiful letter of encouragement. It was written to those who are *called* and reminds us of who we are and Who is able to keep us. May you be provoked as you study the twenty-five verses of this letter – provoked to fight, provoked to fortify yourselves in your most holy faith, and provoked to fall on your knees in praise to the only wise God. To Him and Him alone be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen!

### **Memory Verse:**

*“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week’s end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – JUDE 1:1-4**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read Jude in its entirety.

Jude was not only the brother of James, he was also the half-brother of Jesus. Jude, along with the other brothers of Jesus, did not believe Jesus until after the resurrection. Imagine what it must have been like when the Holy Spirit revealed this incredible truth, that their brother was the Messiah, the Chosen One, the Holy Lamb of God. Jesus’ brothers had known Him from their

birth. Suddenly, the childhood of Jesus must have made sense. They had watched Him not only in the spotlight of ministry, but they watched him when He was hungry and sleepy; they were very aware of His reactions to the challenges of day-to-day life. The disciples could testify of Jesus, but think how much more powerful a testimony James and Jude had. They could confirm from their daily experiences all the disciples said and wrote.

1. How does knowing who wrote this letter inspire you to take careful consideration of its contents?
  
2. Read James 1:1. Both James and Jude introduce themselves as servants of the Lord, rather than refer to their natural relationship with Him. Why do you think they chose to use the title “*servant* of Jesus Christ” rather than “*brother* of Jesus Christ”?

- a. How does this speak to you about the titles you choose or desire for yourself?

3. The letter of Jude is not specific as to whom it is written to. How are the readers described in verse 2?

To those who are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ by God the Father, and \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ.

- a. What other word does he use to refer to the recipients in verse 3?

Jude removes the harshness of the strength of this letter, by reminding those he is writing to of who they are. The term *beloved* does not refer to *Jude's* tenderness towards the reader, but to *God's*. “Divinely loved ones” or “God’s beloved ones” gives a better sense of the meaning.

4. The first four verses of Jude contain his greeting and purpose for writing the letter. What was Jude’s concern?

- a. How are these men described in verse 4?

- b. Who did they deny?
  - c. What does 1 John 2:22,23 say about this?
5. In response to the problem mentioned in verse 4, what was Jude exhorting the Beloved to do?
6. Record what you learned from the following examples of contending for the faith:
- a. Acts 6:8-10.
  - b. Acts 17:3
  - c. Acts 18:28
7. Personal: Explain in your own words what it means to contend for the faith as a Christian today.

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*  
*1 Timothy 6:12*

## **SECOND DAY – JUDE 1:4-19**

Read all of Jude for review.

Jude does not mince words as he describes these men who crept in unnoticed.

1. List what you discover about these men in the following verses:

Verse 4

Verse 8

Verse 10

Verses 12,13

Verses 14,15

Verse 16

Verse 18

Verse 19

2. In verse 5-11, Jude lists 6 examples of apostasy in the past and the judgment of God upon them. In verses 5-7 he discusses the sin of unbelief, the rebellion of the angels, and the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. He further warns of the sins of Cain, Balaam, and Korah in verse 11. Cain was an example of the man who believes in God, but seeks Him according to his own terms. Balaam's sin was that of greed, seeking after gain above God's will. Korah's sin can be described as a denial of authority. Why must we be careful not to allow these kinds of thinking into either our lives or our church?

3. Jude verses 12 and 13 present six vivid pictures of the false teachers. Choose one of the examples given and describe in your own words what Jude is saying.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Jude is very thorough in describing the false teachers and their sure judgment. Jesus was equally stern with those who misrepresented the truths of God. Record His concern from Matthew 23:13.

### **THIRD DAY – JUDE 1:17-23**

Begin by reading Jude in its entirety.

In this paragraph division Jude switches gears and focuses back on the recipients of the letter, God's beloved believers.

1. With what two words does Jude begin verse 17 and 20?
2. List the instructions given to believers in this section of Jude and give a description of what you think that looks like practically.

Verse 17

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

3. How would obeying these commands be an antidote to falling prey to the deception of a false teacher?
4. According to these verses, what is our responsibility to one another? (See James 5:19,20)
5. Personal: While some people today would shy away from taking a firm approach when it comes to exposing false teachers and defending the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Jude's letter reminds us that there may be times when it's necessary to take a bolder, more aggressive stance in defending what we believe – not allowing the world to pollute it, dilute it, or destroy it – and exhorting our brothers and sisters in Christ not to stray from it. Have you ever had to take a firm stance in defending the truth of the gospel? What was the outcome? Can you share your story?



## **FOURTH DAY – JUDE 1:24,25**

Read Jude, focusing on verses 24 & 25.

The closing statement of Jude is one of the most beloved benedictions in the Bible. It takes us from the command to contend for the faith, the description of those we are fighting, the instructions to believers as to how to contend, and brings our focus to the One who contends for us, our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Take a moment to dissect Jude verse 24:

- a. According to verse 24, what is He able to do?
- b. How is He going to *present* you?
  - describe *faultless*
- c. What is His attitude going to be?
  - describe *exceeding joy*
- d. Now, what is your reaction to these facts?

2. Meditating on Jude 24 helps us relate to Jude's response in verse 25. Write out verse 25:

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a. Describe God's wisdom:

Can you give a scripture to support your answer?

b. Describe God's glory and majesty:

Can you give a scripture to support your answer?

c. Describe God's dominion and power:

Can you give a scripture to support your answer?

3. Personal: How does dwelling upon the reality of Jude 24 and 25 cause you to want to respond to Jude's exhortation to contend for the faith?

*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,  
be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. - 1 Timothy 1:17*

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?

Blank lined paper for writing.

