

## A BREIF INTRO TO 1 JOHN

### Authorship:

1 John was written by John the son of Zebedee and brother of James. The writing does not include the authors name, and was first attributed to John first by Ireneaus in 140 AD.

### Date of Writing:

It is difficult to date with precision, but based on external evidences and known heresies of the time it is determined to fall in the range of 85 AD - 95 AD.

### Recipients:

It was addressed to believers, but does not say where these believers are located. It was probably intended to be a circular letter that traveled between bodies of believers. It is believed that this letter got its start in Asia Minor around Ephesus.

### Purpose of Writing:

John wrote this letter with two basic purposes in mind.

1. To expose false teachers (Gnosticism).
2. To give believers assurance of salvation.

### What is Gnosticism?

Gnosticism is one of the most dangerous heresies of the first 2 centuries of the church. It's central teaching was that the spirit is entirely good and matter or flesh is entirely evil. It contains 5 important errors.

1. Man's body, which is matter (flesh), is therefore evil. It is to be contrasted with God, who is wholly spirit and therefore good.
2. Salvation is the escape from the body, achieved not by faith in Christ but by special knowledge. (greek word for knowledge is Gnosis)
3. Christ's true humanity was denied in two ways.
  - a. Some said that Christ only seemed to have a body.
  - b. Others said that the divine Christ join the man Jesus at baptism and left him before he died.
4. Since the body was considered evil, it was to be treated harshly.
5. Paradoxically, this dualism also led to licentiousness. The reasoning was that since matter ( not the breaking of God's law) was considered evil, breaking his law was no moral consequence.

**1 John 1:1-4**  
**The Word Of Life**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

What do you associate with the term “fellowship”?

How do you know that the events we read about in history books really happen?

**EXPLORE THE WORD:**

What was from the beginning? (vs. 1)

What contact did the writer and this community of believers have with the Word of Life? (vs. 1)

How did God reveal Himself to us? (vs. 2)

What was being proclaimed by this community of believers? (vs. 2)

Where had the eternal life been, and to whom had it appeared? (vs. 2)

Why was the author and his fellow believers telling others about Christ? (vs. 3)

With whom did this community of believers have fellowship? (vs. 3)

Why was this letter written? (vs. 4)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

Why do you think John stressed his and this community of believers’ personal, historical encounter with Jesus?

How important are firsthand eyewitness testimonies, such as this writer’s, to your belief in Jesus? Why?

What fellowship do you have with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?

What fellowship do you have with other believers?

How is our fellowship with God related to our fellowship with other believers?

What blocks our fellowship with God and others?

In what ways can we enhance our fellowship?

In what way is your joy made complete?

**APPLYING TRUTH:**

What can you do to gain a better appreciation of the historical foundation of your faith in Christ?

What specific steps will you take this week in order to deepen your fellowship with other believers?

## **1 John 1:5-10** **Walking in the Light**

### **OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Why might it be hard for someone to admit that he or she was wrong about something?

What do we tend to deceive ourselves about?

### **EXPLORING THE WORD:**

What message did the writer hear and declare? (1:5)

What inconsistency did John address? (1:6)

What results from “walking in the light”? (1:7)

How were some believers apparently deceiving themselves? (1:8)

What is the result of confessing one’s sin? (1:9)

In what way can a person make God out to be a liar? (1:10)

### **UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

What do you think the terms “light” and “darkness” represent?

In what way is God similar to light?

In what way do we “walk in darkness”?

How can we “walk in the light”?

How does the promise of being purified from all sin make you feel?

Why would someone claim that he or she was without sin?

What role does the confession of sins play in your daily life? What role should it play and why?

How important is fellowship with other believers to you? Why?

### **APPLYING TRUTH:**

What steps will you take this week to walk in the light?

What areas of your life are sinful and need to be confessed before the Lord?

How will you incorporate this confession into your daily routine?

**1 JOHN 2:1-14**  
**Our Advocate and New Commandment**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

When and why might someone need an attorney?

Have you ever struggled with a new rule or law?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

Why did John write this letter? (2:1)

What was the purpose of Jesus' life and death? (2:2)

For whom is Jesus the atoning sacrifice? (2:2)

What test did John describe for knowing whether or not a person truly knows God? (2:3-6)

What did John say he was giving to his readers? (2:7-8)

How are claiming to be a Christian and loving one's fellow Christians related? (2:9-11)

Why did John write to "the dear children"? (2:12-13)

Why did John write to "the fathers"? (2:13-14)

Why did John write to "the young men"? (2:13-14)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

In what way is Jesus like our attorney?

How can we get to know God better?

What does the way in which we treat other believers reveal about us?

What confidence does Jesus' atoning death give to us?

What confidence should our relationship with the Father give us?

What area of your life do you need to examine in order to see your sins more clearly?

How do you need to change the way you relate to fellow believers in order to develop a deeper relationship with God?

**APPLYING TRUTH:**

How can you show the love God toward fellow believers this week?

How can we allow the word of God to abide in us richly, and overcome the evil one?

**1 JOHN 2:15-17**  
**Do Not Love the World**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Which of these three most clearly motivates the people you know and why?

1. The drive to meet their physical needs
2. The drive to get things.
3. The drive to succeed.

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

What restrictions should we place on our affections? (2:15)

What should disciples not love? Why? (2:15)

What is the result of loving the world? (2:15)

Why did John tell us not to love the world? (2:15-17)

How did John categorize the things in the world? (2:16)

From where do the things in the world come? (2:16)

From where do the things in the world not come? (2:16)

What passes away? (2:17)      Who lives forever? (2:17)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

How do we love the world and the things in it?

What things in the world are you tempted to love?

What would you categorize as “the cravings of sinful man”? “The lust of the eyes”?  
“the boasting of what he has or does”?

Why are the things and values of the world so enticing to us?

What worldly things or values do we substitute for God?

What does it mean to do the will of God?

How can we guard against adopting the values of the world?

From what worldly thing or value do you need to turn in order to pursue your relationship with God?

**APPLICATION OF TRUTH**

What specific steps will you take in order to find satisfaction in your relationship with God rather than the things of the world?

How will you do the will of God today?

**1 JOHN 2:18-27**  
**Warning Against Antichrists**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Who are the enemies of the Church today?

What do you think is the best defense against cults and other false spiritual teaching?

**EXPLORE THE WORD:**

What time did John say it is? (2:18)

Who was coming and who had come at the time John wrote this? (2:18)

What did John say about those who had left? (2:19)

What did the readers of 1 John have? What did they know? (2:20-21)

How is the antichrist identified? (2:22)

In what way is denying (or acknowledging) the Son related to having the Father? (2:23)

What did John encourage his readers to do? (2:24)

What did the Father promise? (2:25)

Why did the author write these things? (2:26)

What was the relationship between the anointing these believers received and their need to be taught? (2:27)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

Do you think that we are living in the last hour today? Why or why not?

What antichrists are among us today?

What truths do we know about Christ?

What have we been taught by the anointing of the Holy Spirit?

How can we remain in or have fellowship with Jesus Christ?

What groups of people are trying to lead believers astray today?

How can we protect ourselves against false teachers and antichrist?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

What will you do this week to deepen your fellowship with Jesus Christ?

Who is someone you will encourage in their relationship with Christ this week?

**1 JOHN 2:28-3:10**  
**Children of God**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

In what ways are you like your mother or father?

What was one of the benefits of being the child of your parents as you grew up?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

Why did John encourage his readers to continue in Christ? (2:28)

What is true about everyone who does what is right? (2:29)

How has the Father lavished love upon believers? (3:1)

Why doesn't the world know Christians? (3:1)

What will happen to the children of God when they see Christ? (3:2)

What kind of person purifies himself or herself? (3:3)

What is sin? (3:4)

Why did Christ appear? (3:5)

How is a person who lives in Christ unusual? (3:6)

What does it mean to do what is right? (3:7)

What did John say about the person who does what is sinful? (3:8)

Why did the Son of God appear? (3:8)

Why can't the person who is born of God continue to sin? (3:9)

How are children of God and children of the devil identified? (3:10)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

What does it mean to continue in Christ?

How are you preparing yourself for Christ's return?

What is so great about being a child of God?

When have you felt that your nonChristian friends did not really know or understand you?

How do you reconcile the fact that Christians do sin with the statements that they cannot sin or keep on sinning?

How can we know that we are children of God?

How do you need to change your daily routine so that you may be confident and unashamed before Christ at His second coming?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

What step will you take today to purify yourself?

What area of weakness will you ask God to strengthen this week?

**1 JOHN 3:11-24**  
**LOVE ONE ANOTHER**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Who is someone whose life is an example of what it means to love? Hate?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

What message had the readers of 1 John heard from the beginning? (3:11)

Why did Cain murder his brother? (3:12)

About what should believers not be surprised? (3:13)

How can a person know that he or she has passed from death to life? (3:14)

What is the result of hating one's brother? (3:15)

How do we know what love is? (3:16)

What question did the author ask his readers? (3:17)

How should Christians love? (3:18)

What is God greater than? (3:20)

What is the result of not being condemned by one's heart? (3:21-22)

What is God's command? (3:23)

What is the result of obeying God's Command? (3:24)

How do believers know that God lives in them? (3:24)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

How does the world hate believers today?

When have you experienced the hatred of the world?

What does it mean to love one's brother?

When do you struggle with loving other Christians?

How do you demonstrate your love for fellow believers?

Why do we struggle with loving other Christians with our material possessions?

Why is it easier to love with words rather than actions?

In what way does love result in life, and hate result in death?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

How can you use your material possessions to love another believer this week?

What specific step will you take this week to put your love for another Christian into action?



**1 JOHN 4:1-6**  
**Test the Spirits**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Would you hire just anyone to build your house? Why or Why not?

What makes something either “worldly” or “Christian”?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

What did John instruct his readers to do? (4:1)

Who did John say had gone into the world? (4:1)

How is the Spirit of God recognized? (4:2)

How can we distinguish truth from error in spiritual matters? (4:2-3)

What spirit does not acknowledge that Jesus is from God? (4:3)

Why did the writer say that believers had overcome the spirit of the antichrist? (4:4)

Where is the spirit of the antichrist from? (4:5)

From what viewpoint does the spirit of the antichrist speak? (4:5)

Who does and does not listen to those who are from God? (4:6)

How are the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood recognized? (4:6)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

What spirits should we be testing today?

What false prophets are in the world today?

What segments of our society would you say are influenced by spirits of the antichrist?

What is the significance of acknowledging that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?

In what way have you overcome the world?

How does the truth that Christ is greater than the devil make you feel?

How can we reflect our confidence in Christ’s supremacy over the devil?

How would you distinguish between seeing from the world’s viewpoint and seeing from God’s viewpoint?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH**

What influences in our life (ei... books, movies, music, ideas, etc...) will you “put to the test” this week to see whether they are from God?

What false prophets do you need to guard yourself against this week?

**1 JOHN 4:7-21**  
**God's Love and Ours**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

Which do you think is more powerful motivator – Love, fear, or hate? Why?

When have you been motivated by love?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

What were the readers of 1 John encouraged to do? (4:7)

What is the relationship between loving and knowing God? (4:8)

How did God show his love? Why did God send his Son? (4:9)

What is love? (4:10)

Why should Christians love one another? (4:11)

What is the result of loving one another? (4:12)

How can believers know that they live in God and God lives in them? (4:13)

What did John testify concerning (4:14)

What happens when we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God? (4:15)

Why is love important and how is love made complete? (4:16-17)

What does perfect love do? Why? (4:18)

Why should we love? (4:19)

What is the relationship between loving God and loving one's brother? (4:20-21)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

How can we demonstrate our love for God?

What example has Jesus set for us to follow?

How should God's love motivate you to love others?

How do you know that God lives in you?

What does it mean to live in God?

Why is it easier to love God than other Christians?

When you have difficulty loving other believers, what is it that makes it difficult?

How can we demonstrate our love for others?

What are you afraid of? How can we overcome those fears? How does love drive out fear?

**APPLYING TRUTH:**

What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate your love for another believer (even difficult ones)?

What fear will you ask God to help you overcome?

**1 JOHN 5:1-12**  
**Faith in the Son of God**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

What makes a person's testimony seem credible or incredible?

What do you find burdensome or difficult to do?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

Who is born of God? (5:1)

What can be said about the person who loves the Father? (5:1)

How can a person know if he or she loves God's people? (5:2)

What is love for God? (5:2)

What unique quality do God's commands have? Why is this true? (5:3-4)

Who overcomes the world? How can we overcome the world? (5:4-5)

How did Jesus Christ come? (5:6)

Why does the Spirit testify? (5:6)

What three things are in agreement? (5:7-8)

Why is God's testimony greater than man's testimony? (5:9)

Who has made God out to be a liar? (5:10)

What testimony has God given concerning His Son? (5:10-11)

What do we have if we have Christ in us? (5:12)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

What does it mean to be born of God? How can we know that we are born of God?

How do you know that you are a child of God?

What are the commands of God with which you struggle to obey?

In what way should we love the children of God?

When have you thought that God's commands were burdensome or difficult?

What does it mean to overcome the world? How have you overcome the world?

What is your relationship to the Son?

How can a person receive eternal life?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

How will you demonstrate your love for the Father today? How will you celebrate your life in the Son today?

What steps do you need to take in order to be certain you are a child of God?

**1 JOHN 5:13-21**  
**Concluding Remarks**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

What might make you scared to ask someone for something?

What sort of things do people today put their hope in?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

Why did John write this letter? (5:13)

What confidence can believers have? (5:14-15)

About what type of sin did John say his readers should pray? (5:16)

What is sin? (5:17)

What does the person born of God stop doing? (5:18)

What sort of protection do Christians enjoy? (5:18)

Who has control over all the world? (5:19)

What has the Son of God done, and what has he given? (5:20)

Who is Jesus Christ? (5:20)

What was the last instructions John left with his readers? (5:21)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

How can we be confident that we have eternal life?

When is it hard for you to approach God with confidence?

How can we know whether something is according to God's will?

In what way can sin lead to death?

To what sort of death might sin lead?

In what way has sin led to death in your life?

What type of sin does not lead to death?

By what modern "idols" are you tempted?

About what issue do you need to approach God more confidently?

**APPLYING TRUTH:**

What specific steps can you take this week to place more confidence in God and less in the idols of this world?

What matter will you bring before God this week? What believer struggling in sin will you pray for this week?

## **INTRODUCTION TO 2 JOHN**

AUTHOR: John

DATE: Around the same time as 1 John

PURPOSE: During the first two centuries the gospel was taken from place to place by traveling evangelist and teachers. Believers would take these missionaries into their homes and give them provisions for their journeys. Because of the Gnostic teachers also traveled and relied on these practices, 2 John was written to urge believers to use discernment in supporting traveling teachers so they would not unintentionally contribute to the false teaching.

## **INTRODUCTIION TO 3 JOHN**

AUTHOR: John

DATE: Around same time at 1 John and 2 John

PURPOSE: See in intro to 2 John. Itinerant Teachers sent out by John had been rejected in a church in the province of Asia by a dictatorial leaders, Diotrephes, who even excommunicated members who helped out John's teachers. John wrote this letter to commend Gaius for supporting the teacher and to indirectly warn Diotrephes.

## **2 JOHN 1-13** **From The Elder**

### **OPENING QUESTIONS:**

When was the last time you actually wrote a letter, card or note to a person?

Why is starting something relatively easy, while continuing it is usually more difficult?

### **EXPLORING THE WORD:**

To whom was this letter addressed? (1)

Who wrote this letter? Why? (1-2)

What unique characteristics do Christians have? (2)

What did the elder say would be with him in truth and love? (3)

What gave the elder great joy? (4)

What command did the writer give to his readers? (5)

What is love? (6)

What did many false teachers of John's day deny? (7)

What did the elder encourage his readers to do? (8)

What is true about someone who does or does not continue in the teaching of Christ? (9)

Who was the reader of this letter not to welcome into his or her house? Why? (10-11)

Why did John not want to write all that he had to say? (12)

Who shared in John's greeting? (13)

### **UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

In what way does truth live in us?

Describe a time when seeing another believer walking in the truth has brought you joy.

How should we show our love for one another?

What does it mean to continue in the teaching of Christ?

What does it mean not to welcome a person who does not share in the teaching of Christ?

How would welcoming someone without correct teaching about Christ be sharing in his or her wickedness?

How can we avoid false teachers without being cold or inhospitable?

What sort of people should you deny a welcome into your home?

### **APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate your love for other believers?

What will you do today to continue in the teaching of Christ?

**3 JOHN 1-14**  
**From the Elder**

**OPENING QUESTIONS:**

What gives you the greatest joy in life?

What sort of people in your church are well thought of?

**EXPLORING THE WORD:**

Who did John write this letter to? (1)

For what did the elder pray? (2)

What gave the writer of 3 John great joy? (3-4)

In what was the recipient of this letter faithful? (5)

What information was circulating among the people in Gaius's church? (6)

Why were the brothers sent out? (7)

Why did the elder say that believers ought to show hospitality to Christians who serve God? (8)

What did Diotrephes love? What was he doing? (9-10)

What did the elder encourage Gaius to do? (11)

What is true about people who do good and people who do evil? (11)

What was commendable about Demetrius? (12)

Why is 3 John so short? (13-14)

What did the writer of 3 John hope to do? (14)

**UNDERSTANDING TRUTH:**

What does it mean to love someone in the truth?

If other believers were to give a report about you, how would they describe your faithfulness?

What about being a believer gives you joy?

In what area of life do you struggle to be faithful?

How can we show hospitality to other Christians?

In what situations do we love to be first, like Diotrephes?

What motivates people to gossip?

In what areas of your life do you need to do better at "Imitating good" rather than evil?

What can you do to improve your record of faithfulness?

What kind of reputation do you have at your church?

**APPLYING THE TRUTH:**

In what area of your life can you be more faithful this week? How will you imitate good rather than evil?