

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

I JOHN

- Study 1 - 1 John 1:1-10
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INTRODUCTION

"..... John's epistles. . . insist that true Christian faith requires knowing that Jesus the Christ came in human flesh, lived a human life, and died in the flesh. But the evidence of that faith is measured by the genuineness of one's Christian lifestyle, not so much by what one 'knows'. The knowledge that God is light is tested by whether one walks in that light and obeys God's commands. The knowledge that God is righteous is tested by whether one lives righteously as befits one born of God. The knowledge that God is love is tested by whether one loves fellow believers even as one loves God. The single but radical requirement for love and obedience in the Johannine Epistles recalls the simplicity of Jesus' own teaching and the radical response he required of those who would follow him. The ability of these letters to recall to the church its origins and cause it to hear afresh the word of him who came in the flesh has preserved a special place for them in the life and devotion of the church."

(Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol.XII,p.293)

PLEASE READ THE EPISTLE THROUGH AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE FIRST STUDY.

I JOHN STUDY I

READ: I John 1:1—10

1. List all the reasons given in this first chapter to support John's claim that he is a reliable witness.
2. What is his purpose in writing this letter?
3. What do you understand the word "*fellowship*" to mean?
4. Do you think that there is a difference between the fellowship to be experienced between John and his readers and the fellowship experienced by John with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (v.3)? Explain.
5. What characteristic of God must be acknowledged in order to have fellowship with Him?
6. By what test is our fellowship determined?
7. How does John answer the implied claim that it is necessary to have a sinless life in order to have fellowship with the Father and the Son?
8. How then is our fellowship with God maintained?
9. List the false beliefs that John is correcting in this chapter.

NOTE: *Meaning of "walk" as used in I John: "to march in (military) rank; to keep step; (fig.) to conform to virtue and piety; walk (orderly)." Strongs Concordance #4748*

10. How would you identify a person who is walking in the darkness?
11. How would you identify a person who is walking in the light?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

12. Review the information given in this chapter and ask yourself:
 - a) Are there things I should be doing? List them.
 - b) Are there things I should not be doing? List them.

I JOHN STUDY II

READ: I John 2:1—14

1. Explain in your own words the meaning of verses 1 and 2 of this chapter.
2. By what test can our knowledge of God be determined?
3. From chapters one and two list the statements which identify a person as a liar.
4. Why does John link love and obedience together (v. 4 & 5)?
5. How is the profession of life in Christ to be supported?
6. List at least four ways in which you could fulfill this requirement.
7. Explain vs. 7 & 8 in your own words.
8. What is the next test of a true believer?

NOTE: Meaning of "hate" in I John: - *to detest (espec. to persecute); by extension - to love less; hate(full).* (Strong's concordance — #3404)

9. What reason is given for this wrong behavior?
10. List the identifying marks of the following to whom John writes:
 - Children
 - Fathers
 - Young men

NOTE: Re: vs.12—14 - *Of the varied explanations given for the terms used, "children", "fathers", "young men", I best like Dodd's explanation. He thinks the writer is simply using a rhetorical device to indicate qualities appropriate to the three stages of life, which ought to be true of all believers. All Christians should have the innocence of children, the strength of youth, and the maturity of age.* (N.I.C.N.T. — Epistle of John, Friarshall, p.138)

PERSONAL APPLICATION

11. Which of these are true in your own experience?
12. Identify the area in which your credibility as a believer is weak. Think of some positive steps you can take this week to rectify this problem. List them here.

I JOHN STUDY III

NOTE: Meaning of "world" as used in I John:*It is not the world as God intended it to be but 'this world' set over against God, following its own wisdom and living by the light of its own reason... The two dominant characteristics of 'this world' are pride, .. which leads (man) to act as though he, . .were the lord and giver of life; and covetousness, which causes him to desire and possess all that is attractive to his physical senses.* (New Bible Dictionary, p.1339)

READ: I John 2:15-29

1. Why is a love of the world in opposition to a love of the Father?
2. What characterizes a love for the world?
3. Contrast the results of loving the world and doing the will of (loving) God (vs. 15—17).
4. Explain in your own words the meaning of vs. 18 & 19.
5. To what does John attribute the readers' *knowledge of the truth*?
6. Who is identified as a liar in this section?
7. On what basis does John declare that such a person does not know the Father. (See John 14:6)
8. Read John 1:1-14. List the facts which were taught about Jesus "*from the beginning*" (v.24).
9. Anyone who denies these facts is identified as the _____. What does such a person desire to do?
10. What defense do Christians have against error?

NOTE: *Anointing* — *The specific endowment of the Holy Spirit.* (Strong's Concordance — #5545)

11. a) What does it mean to continue or abide in Him?
- b) What benefit does this bring to us?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

12. Look at those attitudes which characterize a love for the world. Which of these appeals to you the most? Are there changes you need to make in the priorities of your life? Write down the one you will work on this week.

I JOHN STUDY IV

READ: I John 3:1—24

1. Why are we called "*children of God*"?
2. What is the meaning of the statement: "*The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.*"
3. What stimulates us to lead a pure life?
4. What two activities are mutually exclusive?
5. By what test can the children of God be identified?
6. What is the significance of the phrase "*No one born of God continues to sin (NIV)*" or "*doth not commit sin (KJV)*"
7. Do these verses teach that "real" Christians never sin? Give Biblical support for your answer.
8. What second identifying characteristic of the children of God is presented in this chapter?
9. Whose evil example are we to shun and why?
10. How can we know that we belong to the truth?
11. What benefit is tied to the practical expression of our love to one another?
12. List the two commands we have been given.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

13. Does the information contained in this chapter require any change in your behavior? Commit yourself to some practical step in righteousness or love.

I JOHN STUDY V

READ: I John 4:1-21

1. Why is it necessary to test the spirits?
2. What particular error is identified in these opening verses?
3. Explain the meaning of vs. 4—6
4. List the reasons given for loving one another.
5. In what two ways has God demonstrated his love for us?
6. Does your salvation depend upon how you feel?
 - Support your answer from this chapter.
7. What is the essential requirement for participation in God's life?
8. Since "living" or "dwelling" in love is a proof that God lives in us, explain what this means and give an illustration.
9. How are the acts of love done by unbelievers to be explained?
10. Why is the writer able to say "*in the world we are like him*" (NIV) or, "*as He is, so are we in this world*" (KJV)?
11. What test of genuine love for God is re—emphasized in this passage (vs. 19-21)?

GROUP DISCUSSION

12. The Human Rights Movement calls for legal protection against discrimination on the basis of sex or religious belief. How can Christians avoid compromising the truth of Scripture in these situations?

I JOHN STUDY VI

READ: I John 5:1-21

1. What are the two errors in belief that are proved false by verse 1 of chapter 5?

2. How is our love for God demonstrated?

3. Why is believing that Jesus is the Son of God the key to overcoming the world?

NOTE: *re. vs.6—8. Late manuscripts of the Vulgate add: ". . .testify in Heaven; the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one. And there are three that agree on earth..." This addition is retained in the KJV but is clearly a late gloss and it has no base in early manuscripts.*

(Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol.XII)

"The purpose of the statement seems clear. The author once more affirms that it is the historical Jesus who is the Christ, the Son of God. Although the false teachers may have acknowledged Christ as the Savior, the divine Son of God, they denied his true human existence. Like Cerinthus, they probably held that the Christ came on the man Jesus at his baptism and remained till the time of the Crucifixion. In this way they could deny that the Christ had ever been truly human and subject to suffering and death. The author rightly regards this as a denial of the redemptive activity of God. It was the Son of God who came into the world. It was this same divine Son who was baptized and received the Spirit. It was the Son who, with the Father's approval and in fulfillment of the Father's intention, shed his blood on the cross to redeem humanity. God would not be involved in man's redemption apart from the Christ's true humanity, suffering, and dying. Water and blood become, therefore, the key words of the true understanding of the Incarnation...

Dodd says,

The Spirit is, as we have seen, both a factor in the historical life of Jesus, and a continuing factor in the experience of the Church. Similarly, the baptism and the crucifixion are authenticated facts in history, and as such bear witness to the reality of the incarnate life of the Son of God. Thus the apostolic faith is authenticated against all false teaching by a three fold testimony: The living voice of prophecy, and the two evangelical sacraments: and the three of them are in accord."

(Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol.XII, pp.350 & 351)

4.A) Why does John say that we should accept God's "testimony" or, "witness"?

4.B) On what occasions did God testify regarding His Son?

5. Verse 10 says that anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. What do you think this means?

6. On what is God's gift of eternal life dependent?

7. What is John's purpose for writing this letter?
8. Explain the meaning of vs. 14 and 15.
9. What should be our response to sin in the lives of other believers?
10. Why is the person who is born of God able to live a life free from the control of sin?
11. Re-read the epistle and list the crucial statements which are made about Jesus.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

12. Vs. 3 of this chapter says *"this is love for God: to obey His commands, and his commands are not burdensome"* (NIV). Think about your own experience. Is this true? Why or why not?