

CARE GROUP BIBLE STUDY 

1 JOHN

JESUS CHRIST

GOD INCARNATE

ABIDING - TRUTH - LOVE - OVERCOME



All Scripture quotations are from The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011). All rights reserved.

JESUS CHRIST – GOD INCARNATE: Abiding – Overcome – Truth - Love (1 JOHN) is designed and written for the Kingston Community Church family and its associated care group ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE SERENDIPITY NEW TESTAMENT FOR GROUPS By Zondervan

LIFE CONNECTIONS STUDY BIBLE By Lyman Coleman

THE LETTERS OF JOHN By Colin Kruse

THE BIBLE READERS COMPANION By Lawrence Richards

Developed by

KINGSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

TO LOVE AND HONOUR **GOD** IN BEING

DISCIPLES

and helping make disciples of our

LORD JESUS CHRIST MATTHEW 28:18-20

Address: Corner of Kingston St and London Terrace

PO Box 1155

Palmerston North

Phone: 06 358 0716

Email: office@kingstoncommunitychurch.com

Website: <http://kingstoncommunitychurch.com/>

4 May

1 John 1-2:14

11 May

1 John 2:15-29

18 May

1 John 3

25 May

1 John 4

1 June

1 John 5

INTRODUCTION

1 JOHN

If a person is wrong about Jesus Christ, they are wrong about God, because Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to humanity. God incarnate!

AUTHOR

Even though the author is nowhere named in this letter, it is highly probable that he is the apostle John, now an old man, living in Asia Minor, and pastoring the churches in and around Ephesus.

1 John is written in the simplest Greek in of all the New Testament, but this doesn't make it a superficial or simple book. The apostle John is writing a distillation of all he has learned. "This is who Jesus is. This is what is what Christianity is all about," he is saying.

PURPOSE

The problem was heresy. Apparently, a group of Christians got involved in false teaching, split off from the church, and were now hassling their former friends, probably trying to convince them to adopt their new and 'advanced' views. John wrote to the church, to assure the Christians, in and around Ephesus that they were, indeed, true Christians with the assurance of eternal life.

John wastes no time in defining the false position...

Deficient Doctrine: The false teachers had a low view of Jesus. They did not believe he was the Messiah. They did not believe he was the

Son of God. They denied that Jesus had come in the flesh. They apparently claimed they did not need Jesus because they already knew God and had fellowship with him. They did not believe sin separated a person from God, and so had no need for Jesus' atoning death, to provide forgiveness and a way back to God. John calls them 'antichrists.'

Spiritual Elitism: This group had come to think of themselves as some sort of spiritual elite, claiming they had 'deeper' understanding of Christianity, probably by direct revelation. As an antidote to such spiritual pride, John reminded his readers over and over that Christians are called to love one another, not to look down on their brothers and sisters who do not measure up to their own supposed, superior height.

Discerning Authenticity: John's central concerns are quite clear. He wants to remind and define the marks of a true Christian against the claims of the false teachers. He wants the church family to have assurance that they have eternal life. He wants them to know the characteristics of a true Christian: right belief (TRUTH), righteousness (ABIDING), and love (LOVE).

STRUCTURE

1 John is not like your typical letter of the time. It has no opening greeting, no thanksgiving, and no closing salutations. However, it is addressed to specific (groups of) people who face specific problems. 1 John is potentially a circular letter, intended for several different churches.

The style of writing is related to attitudes and values. It is intended to bring about a deepening and reaffirmation of values already held in the present. It lacks a clear structure, instead revisits the same themes over and over, each time amplifying them further.

John wanted to show the believers that they are the ones who know God, who have fellowship with him, and who have eternal life. The author's purpose was to affirm and assure his readers that they are in the truth, while also showing the 'antichrists' claims to be false.

**I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God
so that you may know that you have eternal life.**

1 JOHN 5:13

This letter is to reassure the believers because their confidence had been shaken by the propaganda of the 'antichrists and their claims to Spirit-inspired teaching, which went beyond what had been received from the beginning.

This book is written to believers who are still holding (ABIDING) to apostolic teaching (TRUTH) about Jesus but have been shaken by the "antichrists" who claim a superior spirituality but deny the core of the Christian faith.

John affirms that LOVE is manifested by obedience. Love is foundational to fellowship. Love is what OVERCOMES.

1 JOHN

1-2:14

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

John is an eyewitness. In these opening passages he lays the foundation of faith. God the Father has a Son, the source of eternal life. This Son, Jesus Christ, has lived in our world, and those who believe in Him have fellowship with Him even now—and through that fellowship and joy.

But to have fellowship with God a person must walk in truth. Must be honest with God and with ourselves. It is neither true nor honest to claim that we are without sin. Instead, we are to confess our sins and so experience both the forgiving and cleansing power of God. As we bring our weaknesses to God, He will transform us and enable us to become the obedient, loving, and trusting people the rest of this letter calls us to be.

Knowing the full extent of the love God extends in Christ's atonement motivates us to serve Him. Salvation is a transforming experience, and those who truly know God will obey His commands and walk as Jesus did. The believer who loves his fellow believer, obeys this command, and so walks in the light. The person who hates his fellow believer is still stumbling around in the realm of darkness.

John seeks to address the whole church, represented as children, young men, and fathers. We can overcome by knowing Christ and abiding in His Word.

Open in prayer

Opening question

When did Jesus become more than just a name to you?

Read scripture

1 John 1-2:14

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What are the ways John, the author, personally experienced Jesus? 1 JOHN 1:1-2
- How should we understand the word “fellowship” in these verses? 1 JOHN 1:3-7
- What does it mean practically to ‘walk in the light’, and to ‘walk in the darkness?’ 1 JOHN 1:6-7
- Why is it important for Christians to talk about “sin”? 1 JOHN 1:8-2:2
- John reminds them about Jesus’s claims about the greatest commandment (MATTHEW 22:37–40). How is truth seen in Jesus and other Christians?
- Who is John addressing in 1 JOHN 2:12-14?
- What foundational truths are affirmed in 1 JOHN 2:12-14?
- As you get older, do you find it easier or harder to forgive your friends, family, church family?

Prayer

1 JOHN

2:15-29

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

The believer must not love the world's ways, share its passions, or be deceived by antichrists who deny Christ and try to lead us astray. The Holy Spirit will enable the true believer to recognize truth and error and to remain in Him.

Open in prayer

Opening question

Are human desires and God's will always opposite?

Read scripture

1 John 2:15-29

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What does it mean to "love the world"? 1 JOHN 2:15-17
- When do you feel yourself pulled toward that type of lifestyle? 1 JOHN 2:15-17
- How should we understand the word "antichrist(s)" in these verses? 1 JOHN 2:18-23
- Where do you see people denying the Father and the Son in today's culture? In the church?

- Does 1 John teach that people who choose to sin cannot be followers of Jesus?
- Where did you feel encouraged/convicted as you read through this passage?

Prayer

1 JOHN

3:1-24

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

God's great love has reached out to make us His very children. We do not know our ultimate destiny, except that we will be like Jesus—and that everyone who looks forward to that transformation purifies himself or herself even now.

In fact, continuing in sin is evidence that a person does not know God. Sin can be traced back to Satan, and Christ appeared to destroy the devil's work. It follows that no one born of God will make a practice of sinning: The divine life planted deep in the personality will now prevent it.

The theme of “doing what is right” turns John's thoughts to love. Evil people hate righteous ones, and hatred is the source of murder. Surely no murderer is infused with eternal life! Rather than take another's life, the one who loves is willing to lay down his own life for others, even as Jesus laid down his life for us. When this kind of love has practical expression in our lives, we know we belong to the Lord. Keep on loving and obeying God and we will have confidence before God and power in prayer.

Open in prayer

Opening question

Does God expect perfection?

Read scripture

1 John 3

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What does it mean to be a child of God? 1 JOHN 3:1
- In your own words, explain the difference between a Christian who falls into sin versus a person who practices sin.
- What reasons does John give, why a Christian should not practice sin? 1 JOHN 3:4-9
- How do the truths of the gospel connect to loving one another? 1 JOHN 3:11-12
- What are some ways “the world” showed hostility to Christians in the early church? What are some ways the world “hates” Christians today? 1 JOHN 3:13-18
- What does it mean for our hearts to “condemn us”? 1 JOHN 3:21
- What is the major proof of true faith/salvation? 1 JOHN 3:23-24
- Where do you have an opportunity to love others today?

Prayer

1 JOHN

4:1-21

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

John again warns about the “spirit of antichrist,” that corrupting influence which seeks to infiltrate the church. That spirit can be recognized by its denial that Jesus is God come in the flesh. It’s a denial that wells up from the world and its evil ruler and is recognized as a falsehood by those who know God.

But again, the prime directive for believers is to love one another. Love comes from God, is revealed in Christ, and is to be lived by Jesus’ people. God has given us His Spirit, for we acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and rely fully on His love. God is love, and as we love the experience of being loved, that love drives out our fears of punishment.

Again, John sums up. Anyone who claims to love God and yet fails to love his brother is a liar. Love for God expresses itself in love for others also.

Open in prayer

Opening question

Do you believe love is more of an action or a feeling?

Read scripture

1 John 4

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What is the key test John mentions in these verses? 1 JOHN 4:1-6
- What are some “spirits” from today’s culture we should test and evaluate?
- Why is the incarnation of Jesus Christ so essential to the Christian faith? 1 JOHN 4:2-3
- How would you describe the connection between God’s love for us and our love for others? 1 JOHN 4:7-12
- As a church, we display God’s love to the world in the way we love one another. What are some practical ways our church can grow in loving one another?
- In 1 JOHN 4:13-16, what five proofs/marks of assurance does John give that we are saved, based on love for God and for others?
- How can love overcome fear? 1 JOHN 4:17-18
- Where do you have the greatest trouble loving people?

Prayer

1 JOHN

5:1-21

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP STUDY

John now sums up his message. Those who believe Jesus is the Christ are born of God. We know we are among the reborn when we love God's children, love God, and keep His commands. Only a new birth can provide this kind of victory over the world.

John speaks of three witnesses—Spirit, water, and blood—which give authentic inner testimony to Christ as the Son of God. That testimony confirms the fact that we have eternal life as a present possession. And so, John writes that we may know we have eternal life and can approach God with assurance, knowing He hears us.

John's letter ends with an appeal to help sinning believers, a reminder that we who are children of God will not keep on sinning, and a promise that God will surely keep us safe.

Open in prayer

Opening question

How would you describe 'faith'?

Read scripture

1 John 4

Provide opportunity to share

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

Use the following questions to guide your discussions

- What is the victory that has overcome the world? 1 JOHN 5:4
- What connection did John establish between love for God and obedience to God? 1 JOHN 5:1-4
- What is meant by ‘water and blood’? 1 JOHN 5:6
- Why were both of those moments critical for John as a witness to Jesus’s authority as the Messiah? 1 JOHN 5:5-9
- How does the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—testify today concerning the true identity of Jesus Christ? 1 JOHN 5:6-8
- What argument is John making when he poses “the testimony of men” with “the testimony of God”? 1 JOHN 5:9-10
- How would you describe the realities of “eternal life”? What does it mean, and what does it look like? 1 JOHN 5:11-12
- In 1 John 5:13 states that “these things” he had written to them would grant them assurance of salvation. Reflect on all we have studied, what are the truths that bring assurance?

Prayer

