

CONFIDENT

**29 DAYS OF GROWING
IN GOD-CONFIDENCE
DEVOTIONAL**

A STUDY IN 1ST JOHN

Pastor Brett Starr, Director of Student Ministries

1st John is one of my favorite books of the Bible which I would recommend to any believer who truly wants to be challenged and encouraged in their Christian life. I truly hope this study will set you on a path of confidence in Christ as well as on a path of being assured in your eternal life. For me, this was a fun journey of study in order to help the believers of New Life Church truly understand and pray through Scripture as well as practically live it out. I am praying that God uses 1st John uniquely in each person who uses this study.

*Sincerely,
Pastor Brett Starr*

How To Use This Study

1. How do I know which day I should be on?

In the upper right hand corner of each page is a page number which corresponds to the 29 days of the study; for instance “**1st John Study: Day 1**”. Also, the corresponding date for each day is printed at the bottom center of each page.

Day 1 of this study is February 2nd and the final day (29) of this study is on March 1st.

2. How do I know which portion of 1st John to read each day?

At the top of nearly every page, the passage is typed out for you (using the **New American Standard Bible**), or it will prompt you to read a certain passage.

NOTE: 1. Even though the NASB translation is used, you may use multiple translations if you want. It is often helpful to read different ways of saying the same thing.

2. The words in the scripture passages that are *italicized*, indicate words that are implied, yet not found in the original Greek manuscripts.

3. What are the small numbers I see, on many pages, inserted within the passage for the day?

For instance, while you are reading the passage for the day on day 3, you will see this:

“What was from the beginning¹”

Do you see the small number “1” at the end of the word “beginning”? That is a footnote. A footnote is a small note at the foot, or bottom, of the page identified by using the same corresponding number. In this study, the footnotes share helpful information about the word or phrase that comes before the number. Make sense? Look at the bottom of this page to see the footnote about the word “beginning”.

NOTE: Aside from the Bible passage each day, the footnotes are THE most important and helpful tool you will have while using this Bible study. Don't ignore them. It was the easiest way for the writer to provide the most helpful information in order for the reader to best understand the passage. It also allowed the entirety of the study to be clear and more succinct.

4. I don't seem to have enough room to write my answers.

Use any open space you can find or use a small notebook in addition to this study.

5. What are some good resources to study 1st John in greater depth?

You will find there are a few thoughts, quotes or questions cited from 3 excellent resources which you might find helpful to further your study of 1st John:

Be Real: Turning From Hypocrisy to Truth by Warren W. Wiersbe

The Letters of John by John R. Stott

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1-3 John by John MacArthur

¹ “Beginning” in this verse could possibly mean either “from before the beginning of time” like in John's Gospel 1:1; or it could mean from the beginning of Jesus' ministry where he revealed himself to the disciples.

1st John 1-5 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Chapter 1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— **2** and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— **3** what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. **4** These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Chapter 2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. **3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: **6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. **8** On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. **9** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. **10** The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. **11** But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. **13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. **14** I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. **17** The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. **19** They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. **20** But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. **21** I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. **22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. **23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. **24** As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. **26** These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. **27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. **28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. **29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Chapter 3 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we

are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. **5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. **6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. **7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; **8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; **12** not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. **13** Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17** But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. **19** We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him **20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. **21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. **23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. **24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Chapter 4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; **3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus

is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. **4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. **5** They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. **6** We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14** We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. **19** We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Chapter 5 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. **4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? **6** This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7** For there are three that testify: **8** the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. **9** If we receive the testimony of men, the

testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. **10** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. **11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. **14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us *in whatever we ask*, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. **16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. **17** All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death. **18** We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one. **20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

An Introduction

1. Why was the Gospel of John written?

John 20:30,31

2. Why was 1st John written?

1st John 5:13

3. Having read the purpose of each of these two books of the Bible, explain in your own words the undeniable importance of each in the lives of believers and unbelievers alike.

4. How would you answer if someone asked you, "How do you know you have eternal life?"

5. Why is Bible study an important spiritual discipline?

- What did the Apostle Paul tell a young pastor named Timothy? 2nd Timothy 2:15
- How does the Bible describe the Prophet Ezra? Ezra 7:10
- What does God's Word do? Psalm 119:105
- What is the Word of God like? Hebrews 4:12
- How should we feel about God's Word? Psalm 19:7-11
- How should I respond to God's Word? James 1:22-25
- Where should God's Word be and why? Psalm 119:9-11
- Why should I be disciplined in doing such things as Bible study? 1st Timothy 4:7,8

6. Spend some time praying through the verses and thoughts above asking God to work in you to make His Word come alive over the next 30 days.

Chapter 1:1-4

1 What was from the beginning¹, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship² with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1. Verse 1 describes what the writer, John, calls the “Word of Life”. Read the Gospel of John 1:1-5 which describes the “Word”. “The Word” is actually a person in whom was “life”; this is Jesus. If you could have been on earth to see Jesus, what events would you most want to see?
2. Verse 2 describes what the writer, John, calls the “eternal life”. How does John describe this “eternal life”? Do you think this is describing Jesus as well? Why or why not?
3. Verses 3 and 4 say that John proclaims/announces/reports/writes what he has seen (the life of Jesus) and heard (the words of Jesus) to his readers. Why does John say he proclaims these things?
4. Read these verses (1-4) again and write down what it says about Jesus (the Word of Life).
5. Those of us, who believe, who know about Jesus’ life and words from Scripture, can also now proclaim these things to others for the same reasons as John. How can you become a better witness to those people in your life who are yet to believe in Jesus?
6. Read how Jesus defines “eternal life” in John 17:3. How is this definition, which means so much more than living forever with God in heaven, helpful to you as you think about the eternal life you possess? And how can it change your everyday life?
7. According to verse 3, people can have fellowship with the people of God and with God himself. Fellowship is more than hanging out around a table of food. It describes a special relationship and new way of living life with others. How can your fellowship with God and His people begin to increase and thrive?
8. How do you think John’s joy was made complete by writing these things?

¹ “Beginning” in this verse could possibly mean either “from before the beginning of time” like in John’s Gospel 1:1; or it could mean from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry where he revealed himself to the disciples.

² Fellowship can be defined as the new type of relationship we have with God and His people, on account of our faith in Christ, as we begin to fulfill, with God’s help, the “one another” verses in the New Testament .

<https://overviewbible.com/one-another-infographic/>

Chapter 1:5-10

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin³, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess⁴ our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1. What does verse 5 tell us about God and what does it mean?

2. When it comes to “darkness”, as we understand it from Scripture, two of its many defining attributes are **first**: unbelief in God/Jesus and **second**: the fruits of that unbelief which manifest in our lives as sin.⁵ With that understanding, according to verse 6:
 - a. What do some people say?

 - b. What do some of those same people do?

 - c. If someone’s actions don’t line up with their words, what is the condition of those people?

3. On the contrary, when it comes to “light”, as we understand it from Scripture, two of its many defining attributes are **first**: belief in God/Jesus and **second**: the fruits of that belief which manifest in our lives as obedience.⁶ With that understanding, according to verse 7:
 - a. In your own words, what does it mean to “walk in the light”?

 - b. And what does this type of walking prove or show?

4. What about those in verses 8 and 10 who claim they are without sin? What effect does that have on themselves as well as God?

5. In verse 9, what happens if we confess our sins to God?

6. Is there any darkness and specific sin in your life right now that you need to confess to God?

³ Sin means to miss the mark of God’s required righteousness either by doing what God forbids or not doing what he instructs. “If we say we have no sin” would be like someone hearing Romans 3:23 which says, “For all have sinned...”, and your response being, “Well, not me...”.

⁴ “Confess” here means to “say the same thing as God and agree with Him about your sin”. Also, in Greek, ‘confess’ is in the present active subjunctive form, which means that the person(s) is(are) performing an urgent ongoing repetitive action.

⁵ 2nd Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:1-21

⁶ Ephesians 5:8,9; John 1:7; 12:36,46

ReRead Scripture : 1st John chapter 1

Pray through Scripture:

- Thank God for the life of Jesus
- Ask God to empower you to live a life more like Jesus
- Thank God for your eternal life
- Express to God your desire to know Him more
- Thank God for the fellowship and relationship you have with Him
- Thank God for the fellowship with other believers (name them) from New Life
- Ask God to deepen and enhance your joy because of the words in 1st John

Act on Scripture: If you have not already, check out the website/infographic about fellowship at the bottom of page 3. Write down the top three aspects of fellowship you want to grow in AND write down how you can better live each one out in your life.

Chapter 2:1-6

1 My little children⁷, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate⁸ with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and He Himself is the propitiation⁹ for our sins; and not for ours only, but also *for those* of the whole world. **3** By this we know that we have come to know¹⁰ Him, if we keep His commandments¹¹. **4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected¹². By this we know that we are in Him¹³: **6** the one who says he abides¹⁴ in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

1. Why does John say he is writing these things to his little children?
2. What hope does John offer those who sin?
3. How is Jesus described and why is this so important for us to understand when it comes to the way in which Jesus interacts with us and our sin?
4. What is the proof that we have actually come to know Jesus?
5. What is the condition of the person who claims to know Jesus but does not keep his commandments?
6. What is the condition of the person who keeps Jesus' word/commandments?
7. Being "in Christ" and "abiding in Christ" are important themes in the New Testament concerning the identity of those who believe in Christ. How does an increasing understanding of these two themes affect the way we look at and understand ourselves?
8. According to verse 6, if we claim to abide in Christ, how are we to walk/live? And how can we best learn how to do that?

⁷ This is a term of endearment spoken to those believers whom John helped believe in Christ and grow in Him.

⁸ This is the same word used in John 14:16 when Jesus told his disciples he would send the Holy Spirit to them. It means "helper/aid/one who comes alongside"

⁹ "Propitiation" means a covering which absorbs the punishment diverting it away from its intended recipient.

¹⁰ "To know" means to have an intimate knowledge of and relationship with

¹¹ "Which Commandments?", you may ask. Well, we could attempt to create a list, which would be difficult but not a futile exercise. However, maybe a better question is, "Through your current reading and study of Scripture, which commands of God/Jesus are you, with God's help, currently prayerfully obeying?" To be clear, our obedience is a result of our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10) and an indicator of our love for God (John 14:15). It is, however, neither a means by which to gain His Love nor earn salvation.

¹² The most perfect act which springs from the love of God is when He gives salvation and eternal life to those who believe, which inevitably results in a life of obedience.

¹³ 2nd Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10

¹⁴ "Abide" means to remain/continue with/be in accordance with. John 15:4-10

Chapter 2:7-11

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new¹⁵ commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. 8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates¹⁶ his brother¹⁷ is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1. John is reminding his readers of this new but old but new commandment. We can infer that this commandment is the commandment to love one another--to love fellow believers. In verse 9, what is the condition of the person who claims to be in the Light, yet hates his brother?
2. In verse 10, what is the condition of the person who loves his brother?
3. In verse 11, what is the reason a person may claim to be in the Light, yet hates his brother?
4. How is it that sin can blind us so much when it comes to our relationships with other believers?
5. How can two believers get so easily caught up in hatred of one another and what is the solution? One solution is offered in Matthew 5:21-24
6. Is there any believer toward whom you can feel the roots of anger and hatred building up within you? Remember 1st John 1:9 as well as take a look at James 5:16.
7. "How does loving a fellow Christian help prevent him or her from stumbling?" *taken from Wiersbe "Be Real" pg 67*

¹⁵ The Apostle John may have Jesus words, recorded in John 13:34, in mind when He gave his disciples the 'new' command to love one another. Also, he may be thinking back to Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; and Mark 12:28-31 where the two greatest 'old' commandments are stated. Think, however, that God/Jesus instructs us to love God first, love our neighbor second, and NOW love a third set of people, "one another"--fellow believers in Jesus--which is why John may claim it is new but old.

¹⁶ "Hate" means the opposite of love, but also means to 'love less'. According to Ephesians 5:29, hate means that someone is not "providing and protecting/feeding and caring for/nourishing and cherishing" another person.

¹⁷ "Brother" or 'sister' in the New Testament often denotes--as it does here--the new familial relationship between those who are believers in Jesus.

Reread Scripture: 1st John 2:1-11

Pray through Scripture:

- Ask God to give you strength to overcome temptation and avoid willful sin
- Thank Jesus for who he is:
 - Our Advocate when we sin
 - The One who took our punishment for our sin
- Ask God to help you live an obedient life to his Word
- Ask God to allow His truth to permeate your soul, mind, and heart as you read Scripture
- Ask God to work in your life so that your life and your walk will emulate Jesus more and more
- Ask God for His light to shine bright in you and through you so that you will show love to others
- Ask God to remove any darkness from your life so you can see clearly how to live for Him

Act on Scripture:

- Forgive, in your own heart, any fellow believer you may be holding something against
- Identify 2 ways Jesus lived His life that you would like to grow in
- Identify and confess any sin which may be present in your life

Chapter 2:12-14

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Note: John states that he is writing to three groups of people (little children, fathers, and young men). Little children is a term used in this letter denoting all believers or it can figuratively mean those who are young in their faith. Fathers and young men can also be taken literally as well as spiritually figurative. Fathers, can literally mean older men who have children or figuratively as those men who are older and wiser in the faith. Young men can literally mean young men who are not fathers or figuratively as those men who are younger and more vibrant in their faith. Regardless, John assumes all groups claim to believe in Jesus Christ.

1. Why does John write to “children” and what are their characteristics?
2. Why does John write to “young men” and what are their characteristics?
3. Why does John write to “fathers” and what are their characteristics?
4. If you see yourself as being in the group of “children”, how do John’s words encourage you, and how can you begin to move into the next stage of being a “young man” type?
5. If you see yourself as being in the group of “young men”, how do John’s words encourage you, and how can you begin to move into the next stage of being a “father” type?
6. If you see yourself as being in the group of “fathers”, how do John’s words encourage you, and how can you begin to invest in the generations under you?

Chapter 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world¹⁸ nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust¹⁹ of the flesh²⁰ and the lust of the eyes²¹ and the boastful pride of life²², is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God²³ lives forever.

1. What is the command given in verse 15?
2. What is the condition of the person who is in love with the world?
3. In what ways do you think the love of the Father(God) is different than the love a person has for the world?
4. Think back to Eve in Genesis 3:6. How is this similar to how John describes the world in verse 16?
5. If these three things describe ALL that is in the world, how is it helpful to you to understand these are also the three categories of temptation we encounter?
6. These three things are described as not being from the Father. What are three things from the Father that are in opposition to these?

Philippians 4:11

Hebrews 12:1,2

2nd Corinthians 10:17

7. Are there any worldly lusts in your life right now that need to pass away?
8. What is the hope for the one who does the will of the Father? And how do we figure out what the will of the Father is?

¹⁸ "The world", in the New Testament, typically denotes the system of belief and action that is opposed to God. It also carries with it the idea of the ornaments that decorate the world. Just like a tree is decorated with eye-catching Christmas ornaments, the world is decorated with worldly ornaments which we see and desire.

¹⁹ "Lust" is in the same Greek family of terms which means (to desire/to covet/to want) something so badly which is not yours to have, yet you passionately long for. That thing does not and typically cannot belong to you.

²⁰ "Lust of the flesh" is when we long to fulfill a desire we have, but fulfill it in a way contrary to God.

²¹ "Lust of the eyes" is when we visualize or see something which has the potential to enhance the lust of the flesh.

²² "Boastful Pride of life" is that sense of accomplishment which says "Look at **ME** now! Look what **I** have gained, accomplished, and conquered!"

²³ 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18; 2nd Peter 3:9; 1st Thessalonians 4:3; 2nd Corinthians 7:10; 1st Peter 2:15

Reread Scripture: 1st John 2:12-17

Pray through Scripture:

- Thank and praise God for the forgiveness He has given you
- Ask God for His Word to be ingrained in you so much that it allows you to know Him better, overcome the evil one and live for His name's sake and not your own
- Ask God to help you love Him more than anything in this world
- Ask God to reveal the temptations you too often give in to and confess those to Him
- Ask God to give you the strength to overcome the lust of this world and replace it with a desire to serve Him...1st Corinthians 10:13

Act on Scripture:

Take a day or longer to "fast" from something in your life that may be a source of temptation for you. Maybe it is your phone, the internet, eating out, the gym, TV, music, alcohol, sports, spending money etc...

Chapter 2:18-24

18 Children, it is the last hour²⁴; and just as you heard that antichrist²⁵ is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they* went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

1. How does John know that the last hour is upon him/them?
2. It does no good to speculate as to whom the antichrist is, however, how do we identify those who are antichrist? Refer to 1st John 2:22; 4:3 and 2nd John 7.
3. John seems to refer to some specific people, labeled by John as antichrists who were not true believers and left the band of Christian brothers. What characterized these people according to verses 19, 22, 23?
4. What characterized the true believers in verses 20 and 21?
5. What is the instruction, as well as the hope, John gives in verse 24?
6. If someone asked you why you believe Jesus is the Christ/Messiah, what would you say?

²⁴ The phrase "The last hour" only appears once in the Bible: here in 1st John. Some commentators suggest that this refers to a particular age in history encompassing the time between Christ's arrival to the earth and his second awaited coming back to the earth. John 14:3; Matthew 24:36

²⁵ The word "antichrist" only appears 4 times total in the Bible: located in the writings of 1st and 2nd John. It seems that it can refer to any spiritual or human being that denies certain things; including that Jesus is the 'Christ'--meaning anointed one/Messiah. It seems also to refer to a specific singular being who is yet to come, who may have the appearance of the awaited Messiah, yet in nature and being, is antithetical to the authentic Messiah, Jesus.

Chapter 2:25-29

25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life²⁶. 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing²⁷ which you received from Him abides in you²⁸, and you have no need for anyone to teach you²⁹; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you³⁰, you abide in Him. 28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears³¹, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him³².

1. Eternal life is not something earned, it is a promised gift given to those who believe. Look again at John 17:3 and write down how you are going to get to “know” Jesus better and better.
2. We have to recognize that there are those who are trying to deceive us about God, Jesus, and His Word. In our world, we have access to so many Bible teachers. How do we sift through them and decide who is preaching the truth?
3. Why is it so easy sometimes to get wrapped up centering our lives on the words of another human being, even a preacher, and ignore the words of Scripture?
4. What is the command found in this short passage and why does it say we should obey it?
5. When we stand before Christ, what are some reasons we would be ashamed? Mark 8:38
6. In verse 29, what is one of the proofs of our salvation? And, how do we grow in and know what is righteous in God’s sight?

²⁶ John 3:15-17

²⁷ “Anointing” is the Greek word “chrisma” which means something has been smeared or poured. Anointing with oil is the ceremony by which someone was declared a Hebrew priest, or like David, made king. Here, it is not a literal pouring out of something, but a way of saying that the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon (given to and placed in) and is working in a Christian person or a group. (Acts 2:17,18; Proverbs 1:23; Romans 5:1-5)

²⁸ John 14:17 says that the Spirit of truth resides in Jesus’ followers. One major aspect of the Holy Spirit is that he leads us and teaches us truth. In this context of 1st John, we have previously been warned about deceivers who LIE to us. What John is trying to say is that the Holy Spirit is within the people and has given them the truth. (1st Corinthians 2:9-13)

²⁹ This does not mean that believers are to avoid anyone who tries to teach them. That is not consistent with the rest of Scripture. John wants them to test what other teachers are teaching them as compared to what God has already taught them. He is warning them against blindly following the words of man.

³⁰ 1st Corinthians 2:12-16

³¹ Titus 2:11-14

³² John 1:12,13 (This is the first time John uses the term “born of Him” to describe believers. Previously he used “know God”) This is John revealing the nature of our relationship with God deepening from knowing Him to being in His family.

Reread Scripture: 1st John 2:18-29

Pray through Scripture:

- Ask God to help you discern, throughout your life, true and false preachers and teachers
- Praise God for the things you already know from His Word. Maybe you have only known the Bible a few months or for 40 years
- Praise God for His truth and righteousness
- Ask God to reveal to you what His Word means as you read and study it

Act on Scripture: Have a conversation with someone this week about what you believe about Jesus. If this is scary for you, pick your spouse, one of your kids or a close Christian friend. This is good practice!

Chapter 3:1-3

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

1. To “see” means to behold and dwell on. Spend some time with the verses below dwelling on the love of God.
 - a. 2nd Chronicles 6:14
 - b. Psalm 36:7
 - c. Psalm 109:21
 - d. Romans 8:38,39
 - e. Romans 5:8
 - f. Zephaniah 3:17
2. Think about what it means to be chosen by a perfect Father (God) and to be called His child. Read the Gospel of John 1:12,13 How does this affect your personal identity? What are some privileges and advantages of being God's child? How does this bring you comfort?
3. John says that the world does not have a relationship with us(believers) because the world does not have a relationship with God. How can those in the world have a relationship with God?
4. When we meet Jesus when he appears, what will we be like? 1st Corinthians 15:35-49
5. What is our hope? And if we live our lives knowing we have this hope, what should and will we be doing in the meantime?
6. When something is purified, the impurities are taken out. Are there any impurities you need to begin to get rid of in your life?

Chapter 3:4-10

4 Everyone who practices³³ sin also practices lawlessness³⁴; and sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in Him sins³⁵; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed³⁶ abides in him; and he cannot sin³⁷, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1. Why did Jesus appear?
2. What do we learn about Jesus in verse 5 and 8? Read Hebrews 4:15
3. What is one of the proofs that we know and abide in Jesus?
4. In what way do verses 7 and 8 indicate that we can be deceived?
5. What does verse 10 say is obvious?
6. What is the mark of someone who is a child of God? Read John 1:12,13 also.
7. What is one of the first steps to overcoming temptation and sin? Psalm 119:9-11

³³ "Practices", in the Greek, is in the form of a present active participle, meaning it is a current ongoing action. "Active rebellion against God's known will" Stott *The Letters of John* pg. 125

³⁴ "Lawlessness" describes those whom, one day, Jesus will say, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:33) It describes those who act apart from God's law as it is fulfilled and revealed in Christ.

³⁵ "Sins", in the Greek, in in the present active form and would best read, "continues in sin".

³⁶ 'seed' is the Greek word 'sperma'. Seed produces children. The seed of God within us changes us into a new creation (2nd Corinthians 5:17), therefore, the fruit which we now produce is from God (Galatians 5:22,23). You know an apple tree when you see one because of the apples it produces. So too with Christians, we know them by their fruit.

³⁷ "Cannot sin" is best translated "Cannot continue to sin"

Reread Scripture: 1st John 3:1-10

Pray through Scripture:

- Thank God for His love for you and meditate on how His love affects you for a few minutes
- Tell God what it means to you to be one of his children
- Praise God that you will be like Jesus one day when you meet Him
- Ask God to purify you and clean you of your current sins
- Ask God to help you not only to see yourself as righteous (2 Cor 5:21), but to also practice living out your righteousness in everyday life
- Ask God to continue to destroy the works which the devil may be trying to use in your life

Act on Scripture: Find a trusted believer and confess to them any areas of sin God is revealing in your life

Chapter 3:11-15

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren³⁸. He who does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1. John reiterates the command to "love one another". He then mentions the first recorded murder in Scripture; the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Read about it in Genesis 4:1-16. What did you learn from this passage?

2. John then compares Cain hating Abel because of his [Abel] righteous deeds to the world hating Christians (God's children) because of their righteous deeds. Why does the world hate it when Christians follow God and His instructions?

3. "Death to Life" is a very important theme in the New Testament. Read through these verses to broaden your understanding of this theme.
 - a. 2nd Timothy 1:9-11

 - b. Romans 8:2

 - c. Romans 8:6

 - d. Romans 6:23

 - e. John 5:24

4. How do we know that we have passed from death to life?

5. Why is truly loving fellow believers so essential to the life of the church?

6. What does John equate to murder?

³⁸ 'Brethren' is a common New Testament term for fellow Christians

Chapter 3:16-24

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this³⁹ that we are of the truth⁴⁰, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence⁴¹ before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us⁴².

1. What does it mean that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren/brothers? Read John 15:3 also
2. What are we supposed to do if we see a brother(a fellow Christian) in need?
3. How are we supposed to love? Who do you need to begin to love better?
4. Verse 19 says that when we love like this, we will know we are of the truth and our hearts will be assured before God even if our heart attempts to condemn us. Does your heart ever condemn you and tell you that you are not a believer? Does your heart ever condemn you for things you do that aren't even sinful? What is the truth John gives in verse 20 which combats that condemnation? What does Jeremiah 17:9 say about our hearts?
5. Verse 21 then says that there will be times when our heart is not condemning us. This is a great place to be in our Christian life and gives us confidence before God. Verse 22 then gives us an amazing truth. What is that truth? AND, remind yourself of what Jesus said in John 15:16 about prayer.
6. For those whose hearts are not condemning them, and for those who are praying confidently, what are the two things John mentions that will be present in their lives?
7. What are the two commandments given in verse 23 and why are they so significant? And, how can a believer continue to grow in both?
8. John repeats in verse 24 how we know we abide in Jesus. What does he say?

³⁹ It is not only by the truths of Scripture we know we are saved (in the truth) but also by observing the fruit in our own lives. There may be times where we doubt the fruit in our lives and we have to rely more on Scripture, but there will also be times where we don't fully understand God's Word, and it is in those times, John tells us to look at our lives to see what God is doing through us as assurance of our faith.

⁴⁰ John 14:6

⁴¹ Connect Hebrews 4:16 with what 1st John says here.

⁴² All of the obedience, fruit, truth, assurance etc...all come with the help of God himself in the form of the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 8:1-17

Reread Scripture: 1st John 3:11-24

Pray through Scripture:

- Ask God to make this a year in which you are loving your fellow Christians like you never have before
- Ask God to help you get rid of any bitterness you may be holding on to concerning another believer
- Thank God that you have passed from death to life and meditate for a few minutes on what that means. Read 1st Timothy 6:17-19
- Ask God for a better understanding of what it means to lay down your life for others and ask for opportunities to do so
- Ask God to help you love more with your actions than with mere words
- Ask God to take away any condemnation coming from your own heart because of past sins that have already been forgiven
- Ask God to help you do what is pleasing in His sight
- Spend time asking God for things you or others need
- Ask the Holy Spirit to do His work in you
 - Helping you understand Scripture
 - Empowering your spiritual gifts--Hebrews 12:4; 1st Corinthians 12 and 14
 - Praying for you when you don't know what to pray for--Romans 8:26,27
 - Helping you to grow spiritually and show the fruit of your salvation--Galatians 5:25

Act on Scripture:

- Perform one act of kindness/love for another believer who you know is in need
- Offer to pray for someone at work or school who has shared with you something difficult in their life

Chapter 4:1-6

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you⁴³ than he who is in the world⁴⁴. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1. Read verse 1-3. To “test the spirits” does not mean we are to be ghost hunters. Different ‘spirits’ throughout Scripture typically reveal themselves through how they speak. Here, John says that there are false prophets who are out there and we need to be vigilant to understand how to discern between a true prophet who has the Spirit of God, and a false prophet who has the spirit of antichrist. How does John instruct us to know if someone is a true or false prophet?
2. In the technologically advanced world we live in, we can listen to and encounter hundreds of preachers. Why is the info in verses 1-3 so important to us to be aware of?
3. What is the wonderful truth stated about believers in verse 4? Who are the 2 “he’s” mentioned?
4. How are false prophets characterized in verse 5?
5. In verse 6, John is speaking specifically about himself and most likely the other apostles. What does John say that people do with him and other apostles like him?
6. Teachers of all kinds have probably said to their students something like, “There is a difference between hearing and listening.” What does that mean and how does James 1:22 reflect this statement?
7. If a person takes the words of John and the Apostles seriously, what would a person like that be doing with their words?

⁴³ Ezekiel 36:26,27; 2nd Corinthians 1:21,22

⁴⁴ 2nd Corinthians 4:3,4; Ephesians 2:1,2

Chapter 4:7-14

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation⁴⁵ for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

1. What is the major proof of a person who is from God, is born of God and knows Him?

2. Clearly and biblically define love. (Hint: 'It is more than tender affection or sentiment'⁴⁶)
 - a. 1st Corinthians 13:4-7 (How does love act?)

 - b. Ephesians 5:29 (How is love defined? Hint: the opposite of hate)

3. If God is defined as love in verse 8, love must be defined by God and how he thinks, speaks and acts. How does verse 9 and 10 say that God acted in love?

4. John again says that we are to love one another in the same way that God loved us. Considering the context of these verses, how are we to love one another?

5. How do we know that God abides in us? And what is and will be perfected in us? And what do you think that means?

6. How do we know that God has given us his Spirit?

7. John says that Jesus is the savior of the world, meaning that Jesus is the only one who can save those in the world. What other things do people look to in order to save or rescue them?

⁴⁵ Propitiation is a word which means that the punishment we deserved for our sin was diverted away from us to Christ on the cross. It also carries with it a sense of appeasement of the demands God requires.

⁴⁶ Quote from Truth for Life radio broadcast host Bob Lepine

Reread Scripture: 1st John 4:1-14

Pray through Scripture:

- Ask God to reveal to you if there is anyone you may be listening to more than God. It may be an author, a guru, a radio personality, a YouTuber, a celebrity, a politician etc...Ask God for more of a hunger for His Word than the words of anyone else.
- Ask God to help you know the difference between truth and error
- Spend a few minutes thanking God for sending His Son AND thank Jesus for dying for you and being your savior
- Ask God to empower your love for others

Act on Scripture: Listen to last Sunday's sermon again online and try to listen for how you were encouraged to obey, live and believe.

Chapter 4:15-21

15 Whoever confesses⁴⁷ that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence⁴⁸ in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear⁴⁹, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

1. What is a major truth that we must confess in order to have the right to say that God abides in us?
2. If someone asked you why you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, what would you answer? Also, what causes you to believe the love God has for you?
3. Verse 17 says that there is a day of judgement coming AND we can live confidently until and on that day. What causes us to live in that type of confidence?
4. The last phrase in verse 17 indicates that we can live and be as Christ while we are in this world. In what ways would you like to be more like Christ?
5. Try to explain verse 18 as it might relate to relationships between believers.
6. What gives us the ability to love?
7. Verses 20 and 21 are another admonition to love one another. How can you begin to love the believers at New Life Church in a deeper and more tangible way? (Remember, we love in actions and in truth, not just with our words.)

⁴⁷ To "Confess" means to admit and say the same thing.

⁴⁸ Confidence is a word which means boldness, but not arrogance. It is being sure of something.

⁴⁹ "A believer who experiences perfecting love grows in his confidence toward God. He has a reverential fear of God, not a tormenting fear. He is a son who respects his Father, not a prisoner who cringes before a judge." Wiersbe *Be Real Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth* pg. 154

Chapter 5:1-4

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ⁵⁰ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe⁵¹ His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments⁵²; and His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God⁵³?

1. How do we know that we are born of God? And, what will we do if we love the Father?
2. How do we know that we love God's children? What is the proof?
3. How do we know that we love God?
4. We are told in verse 3 that God's commands are not burdensome. This means that they are not meant to add a heavy weight you cannot bear. In light of that, how do we keep this in mind as we are living in obedience to God and how is this helpful?
5. Look back in chapter 2 and see how the "world" is defined and write down what it means to overcome the world. In addition, where does our victory come from?
6. How are you currently showing God you love Him and how are you loving others?

⁵⁰ Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ is the Greek word *Christos*, which means 'annointed one'. The Hebrew word for annointed one is "mashiach" or 'messiah'. Jesus Christ means Jesus, the annointed one or Jesus Messiah.

⁵¹ 'Observe' here is the greek word 'poieo' which means simply to "do and perform"

⁵² Think direction instead of perfection. MNTC pg. 181

⁵³ Read John 5:18

Reread Scripture: 1st John 4:15-5:4

Pray through Scripture:

- Express again to God your belief in Jesus and who he is and what he has done for you
- Ask God for his love to cast out any fear you have
- Ask God to allow you to love others in a way that takes fear away from them. Maybe they are scared of God, scared of the church, scared of the Bible etc...But pray that your love and God's love can overcome those barriers of fear
- Ask God to help you to obey His Word whenever you read it

Act on Scripture: Find two commands of Christ (Maybe in Matthew chapters 5-7) and jot down how you can begin to obey them with God's help and by the power of His Spirit.

Chapter 5:6-12

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. 10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him (God) a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

1. Read 1st John 5:5 again. Now read 5:6-8. What do the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify about and how are they in agreement?
 - a. Spirit--Matthew 1:18
 - b. Water--Luke 3:22
 - c. Blood--Mark 15:39
2. Verse 9 mentions two types of testimony. What are they?
3. What does verse 10 say about those who believe in Jesus and 'have the Son' and those who do not?
4. What does it mean to be a testimony?
5. What is THE testimony God has given?
6. Make a list of people you know who need to hear this testimony from you.

Chapter 5:13-20

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. **14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading to death*⁵⁴, he shall ask and *God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death*. There is a sin *leading to death*; I do not say that he should make request for this. **17** All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading to death*.

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins⁵⁵; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*. **20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

1. Why has the Apostle John written this letter to those of us who believe in Christ?
2. What is the confidence we have before God?
3. What does the term “God’s Will” mean and how can we and will we grow in our knowledge of it?
4. Here are some examples of concrete statements about God’s will. Read them and reflect on them.
 - a. 1st Thessalonians 4:3
 - b. 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - c. 1st Peter 2:15
5. How can we be more confident in our prayer life?
6. The main point of verses 16 and 17 is that we should pray for our brothers and sisters in the faith when we see them or know that they are sinning. Do you know any believers who are caught up in sin? Pray for them.
7. Why do verses 18-20 give believers more confidence?

⁵⁴ Sins Leading to Death: This could possibly mean two things. 1st--it could mean the unbeliever’s blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31), or 2nd, and more likely explanation, it could refer to sins committed by believers (since John says ‘if anyone sees his *brother*’...*brother referring to a fellow believer*), which God decides deserves immediate death (Acts 5:1-11; 1st Cor 11:30; Rom 1:28-32).

⁵⁵ Again, this is ongoing sin which is unconfessed and willful disobedience to God’s known will.

1st John 5:21

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

1. How do we identify idols in our lives?

Ancient idols represented or were looked to as gods and were worshipped in various forms by people who were seeking something from that idol-god in order to better the person's life and get them out of the mess they were in. Imagine praying, giving money to, and sacrificing to the god of war to give you victory; to the god of the skies to make it rain on your crops; to the god of sex/fertility to give you children; to the god of the sea to calm the storms. Oftentimes, idols were small carved images of wood or stone.

These days, we need to imagine the mess we think we are in. We could call this our own personal hell or that part of life we think to be the worst. "I want to escape the hell of (not having enough money; being overweight; being bored; being overworked; being hurt and in pain; being unpopular; not being as attractive as the next person; not being loved; being misunderstood or not liked, and the list could go on and on).

We begin to form an idol out of anything which we think will help us escape our own personal hell. When we begin to evaluate and see that maybe we are spending too much time and money and sacrificing our family, our health, and our sanity AND we evaluate our anger when things don't work out how we think they should, that is when we begin to identify those things which are idols in our lives. We may work too much to get money; diet excessively to get skinny and get angry at ourselves if we cheat on that diet; spend hours and hours in the gym to get fit; spend hours and hours entertaining ourselves with TV, phones, computers, sports to bring joy; medicate with substances to get rid of pain; create constant busyness for yourself to escape the boredom of life, but also to escape having to think in the quiet; go from partner to partner in order to fulfill your need to constantly feel loved; spend more money than you earn, to buy stuff you don't need, to impress people you don't like so that you feel important, popular, and respected. We may also idolize ourselves, in a way, because we want to see ourselves as a flawless god so we excuse our sin by calling it "a preference, my personality, a flaw, something I need to grow in" in order to retain our god-like title.

All the while you have forgotten about the true God who richly provides for you. Prayer has been absent, more time is spent on entertainment than the things of God, you have read more words written by authors, or words written by your pseudo friends on social media, than you have read the words written by your Creator God and Author of your faith. You have spent more on your own pleasures instead of cheerfully giving to the Lord and you have spent more time physically training your body than you have spent training yourself for godliness. Or maybe "God" has become something he is not, such as simply a god who only exists to direct your morals and be there for you when you feel bad so he can make you feel good again.

That's when you know you have begun to allow false gods and idols to creep in and replace the true and living God.

- Identify anything in your life that has potential or might be on its way to becoming an idol in your life?

Final Day Exercise: In chapter 1 verse 4, John says he is writing these things “so that our joy may be made complete” Spend maybe some time and look through this study guide or read the book of 1st John again, or both. Jot down all the statements or verses that bring you joy. Another way of doing this is to take your Bible and this study, and use colored pen or pencil put a small “j” by any verse or statement which brings you joy.

Pray through Scripture:

- Ask God for opportunities to share your faith
- Thank God for your eternal life (John 17:3)
- Pray for anyone you know who may be caught up in sin, that God would grant them life and bring them to repentance
- Ask God to help you sin less and less over the course of your life
- Ask God to reveal, resize--and if need be--remove anything in your life which has the potential to become or is an idol

Act on Scripture: Tell one person on your list (question #6 on day 29) about your faith in Christ and your eternal life. Maybe you could write a letter and send it.

