

1 John
and
2 & 3 John
Leader Guide
(NASB and ESV)

HOW TO KNOW YOU
HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

1 John and 2 & 3 John Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)
© 2017 Precept Ministries International
Published by Precept Ministries of Reach Out, Inc.
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Unless otherwise noted Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible®
© The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995.
Used by permission. www.lockman.org

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)
© 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

1st Edition (7/2017)

USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

PRINTED PAGE NO.	L E S S O N S	PDF PAGE NO.
1	LESSON ONE: John Overview and 2 & 3 John	5
7	LESSON TWO: John 1	11
13	LESSON THREE: John 2	17
21	LESSON FOUR: John 2	25
27	LESSON FIVE: John 3	31
33	LESSON SIX: John 4	37
39	LESSON SEVEN: John 5	43

To locate a particular lesson in the pdf, click on  in the grey bar on the left side of the window. Bookmarks will appear for each of the lessons. Select the lesson you need.

1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John Overview
- 2 and 3 John

1 JOHN

To begin your discussion, you can ask your group if there was something in 1 John which got their attention. Anything God emphasized to them? A point of application? Give time for them to share.

What did the author write about himself in the first four verses?

He was an eyewitness of Jesus' life. He heard, saw, touched the Word.
In this letter, he proclaimed the eternal life which had been manifested to him.
He had fellowship with the Father and Son, and desired others to have the same.

He did not name himself in this letter, but it is accepted that the author was the apostle John.

Ask what they learned about the recipients.

This letter was written to believers—even for believers now.
Relate this to your group; this is a letter written to them.

The believers already knew the truth.

But there were false prophets who were trying to deceive them.
The same is true now.

The author seems to have considered himself a father-figure to the people he wrote.
He called them “little children” seven times.

Encourage your group to continue in their study of this letter because it can change their lives as it was written to them from one who was with Jesus and heard His message.

Ask what they learned from marking “write,” “writing,” and “written.” Why was this letter written? What did the author write about?

John wrote about what he had seen and heard from Jesus so that his, our joy would be complete. He desired for others to have the same fellowship with the Father and Son as he did.

He also wrote so they would not sin, 2:1.

Chapter 2 says he wrote a new, and an old, commandment.

2:12-14 says he wrote to fathers, young men, and children for various reasons.

John wrote to believers because they knew the truth, and because some were trying to deceive them, 2:21 and 26.

He wrote so they would know they have eternal life, 5:13. This verse, combined with 2:1 and 21, summarizes the author's purpose and theme for the letter.

What is the historical setting for this letter?

John, an eyewitness of Jesus in the flesh, wrote to believers who knew the truth, because some deceivers were trying to lead them away from the truth.

At this point, you can ask about the chapters in 1 John using the "Key Words in 1 John" chart as a visual aid to discuss the content of each chapter.

1 John 1

After the introduction in the first verses, which key word is repeated in this chapter?

Verses 5-10 are about sin.

Jesus' blood cleanses from all sin those who have fellowship with Him.

Those denying their sin are deceived.

They don't know the truth of God's Word.

Those who confess it are forgiven and cleansed.

1 John 2

How does the subject of sin continue into this chapter? And what other key words are repeated?

This continues from 1:5-10, the subject of "sin"—written so that believers not sin.

The two key words used the most in this chapter are "know" and "abide."

One can know he abides in Him by walking as He did. It's the same message as 1:6-7.

The one who loves his brother abides in the light. Compare this with 1:7.

Don't love the world.

There is a warning about antichrists in the world—those who deny Jesus.

Then an encouragement to let what they'd heard from the beginning abide in them—the message of eternal life.

There is an anointing every believer has from the Holy One. That anointing gives knowledge of the truth, what they've heard.

1 John 3

What key words are repeated the most in this chapter? What is it about? How does it fit into the overall message of this letter?

The subject of sin continues in this chapter. And the contrast between a true believer and one who merely says he is continues. The one who continues in "sin" does not "know" God.

Verse 2 says God's children, those born of Him, know that when Jesus appears, they'll be like Him.

No one who "abides" in "sin" "knows" Him.

Don't be deceived—those who practice righteousness are His children.

Love shows that a person abides in life.

Those who hate are murderers, and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

At this point, you might ask your group how they think the content of this letter can help them in their Christian life. Give time for them to share what they think.

1 John 4

What is this chapter about?

The first six verses are warning about testing the spirits to see if they are from God. The Spirit of God is contrasted with the spirit of the antichrist.

This is the "love" chapter.

Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

God is love. We love because He first loved us.

By this we "know" that we "abide" in Him, by His Spirit.

You might ask your group how they are doing with loving people, and give some time to discuss what they can learn from this chapter as they study it later.

1 John 5

How did John end this letter?

He told how one can "know" those who are born of God.

Love which equals keeping His commands
Overcome the world by faith

Believe the testimony about the Son which equals eternal life
Confidence in asking
Not continue in sin

He ends by stating that Jesus is eternal life. To know Him is to have life.

Ask your group if a particular part of this letter ministered to them in a special way and give a few minutes for anyone to share what and how.

2 JOHN

What is the message of this letter, and how does it relate to 1 John?
Tell your group to look at their Observation Worksheet and the At a Glance chart.

The author, accepted as John, introduced himself as the elder and wrote to the chosen / elect lady and her children—maybe a local church.

Walking in truth
Commandment from the beginning—love one another
Warning against deceivers, antichrist
Abiding in the teaching of Christ
He hoped to visit them and talk face to face so their joy be complete.

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this letter.

Maybe something like:
Walk in truth and love; don't be deceived

How does this letter relate to believers in churches today?

It's another warning to churches about deceivers. They've been a problem since the church began.

Knowing what God says is the basis for solving the problem—
know the truth and live in it
watch yourselves, so you're not deceived

You might specifically ask about verses 10-11; what does that say to believers now? Give time for your group to discuss application.

3 JOHN

What is this letter about and how is it similar to 1 and 2 John?
Again, use the Observation Worksheet and At a Glance chart as visual aids.

It begins with the elder to Gaius, a beloved brother who was walking in the truth. John again wrote of joy because of other believers.

Gaius loved the church and ministered to believers.

Diotrephes was a contrast. He didn't acknowledge John's authority when he wrote to the church. This letter was a warning against him and what he did.

Demetrius was another individual named in this letter—a good example. Gaius was told to imitate good, not evil.

As with 2 John, John hoped to visit soon.

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this letter.

Maybe something like:

Support fellow workers for the truth

Give time for your group to discuss any personal application they got from 1, 2, and 3 John.

All three of John's letters are about his joy from other believers walking or living in truth—the truth about Jesus Christ. And all three warn against those who don't walk in truth.

All three tell of deceivers who come to believers to lead them away from Christ.

These are letters for the church now—truth, encouragement, and warning for believers now.

Help your group in their discussion to relate the truth to their lives and to life in general.

**1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 1

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group if anything in the lesson spoke to them. Give a brief time for them to share.

Then ask what they remember from their overview of 1 John about the message of this letter.

John wrote to all believers and addressed them as those who “know” certain things. They needed to “know” these things because others were trying to deceive them with false teaching.

He told the believers that they could know they have eternal life.

Love one another.

Keep God’s commands, do what is right.

Don’t continue in sin.

John had seen, heard, and touched Jesus the man, and he said that all who are true believers, those who really have eternal life, believe Jesus came in the flesh. He is God who became a man.

John wrote the believers so they might not sin.

1 JOHN 1

Verses 1-4

What are the first four verses about?

Verse 1 is very specific as to how much contact John had with Jesus the man.

- He and others heard Him with their own ears.
- He and others saw Him with their own eyes.
- He and others touched Him with their own hands.

John wrote that not only did Jesus embody eternal life, but He was manifested as a real man—God in the flesh.

Jesus was with the Father from the beginning, and then He was manifested as a man to John and others.

It was John’s joy to tell, to proclaim this message to others so they might have the same fellowship with the Father and Son as he did. Knowing, believing, that Jesus became a man is essential to having eternal life.

Ask about the definition of “fellowship” and what John said about it in verses 3-7.

koinonia—“indicates the setting aside of private interest and desire and the joining in with another or others for common purposes”¹; “an association involving close mutual relations and involvement”²

The fellowship John wrote about is fellowship with the Father, the Son, and other believers—salvation. He and others who were eyewitnesses proclaimed what they had seen and heard, so others could have this fellowship.

The evidence of it is walking in the light.

What did the cross-references say about fellowship?

1 Corinthians 1:9

Paul wrote that believers are called by God into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:14

The fellowship with the Father and Son is also with the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:1-2

These verses are similar in content to what John wrote in the first chapter of 1 John. Fellowship / participation and making the author’s joy complete. Paul called believers to be of the same mind and purpose because there is encouragement, consolation / comfort, fellowship / participation, affection and compassion / sympathy.

Verses 5-10

What are these verses about?

The message John heard and then announced is—
God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.

He contrasted light with darkness to illustrate a spiritual truth.

The “if we say. . .” repetition begins at verse 6.

If people “say” they have fellowship with God who is the light, yet they walk, live, in darkness, then those people are lying.

¹ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 591.

² J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989).

Those in fellowship with “the light” walk in the light.

According to verse 7, those in fellowship with God are also cleansed with Jesus’ blood. Those are the ones who walk in the light. They’re true believers.

What does 1 John 2:8-11 say about light and darkness?

The darkness is passing away, and the true Light is already shining.

Hating one’s brother indicates that person is in darkness, although he might say he’s in the light. He doesn’t know where he’s going because he is blinded by the darkness.

But the one who loves his brother is abiding in the light.

How do 2 and 3 John relate to this?

2 John

Walking in the truth seems to be a similar statement to walking in the light. Walk according to His commandments in loving one another.

3 John

John was glad Gaius was walking in truth. Hearing of his children walking in truth brought him joy. It’s the same thing he said about those in fellowship with the Father and Son in 1 John 1.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about light and darkness.

John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 11:9-10; and 12:35-36

Jesus said He is the light of the world.
He came into the world and is the source of eternal life.

The people of the world love darkness instead of the Light.
They loved darkness because it hides the fact that their deeds are evil.
They don’t know where they’re going.

There are some who come to the Light. They practice the truth because their deeds are from God. Compare this with 2 and 3 John.

They’re the ones who follow the Light, Jesus.
The light of His life in them shines to show them the way to walk.

Ephesians 5:1-13

All believers formerly lived in the darkness before coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ, before salvation. They lived in, practiced, the deeds of darkness listed in this passage.

If a person continually walks in the darkness, he will suffer the wrath of God. He'll not inherit God's kingdom, Christ's kingdom. He is a son of disobedience.

Although Christians formerly walked, lived, as sons of disobedience, they're no longer to participate in deeds of darkness with those who are still disobedient.

Paul also told believers not to be deceived about those who walk in the light and those who walk in the darkness.

Help your group understand how to evaluate their lives based on the truth of this lesson.

Then ask what it means to "walk in the light" and "walk in the darkness." Tell them to look at Day Three of the lesson.

Walk in the light

Having eternal life

Following Jesus

Loving others

Obedying God's commands, His Word

Giving thanks

The fruit of the light is goodness, righteousness, and truth.

Walk in darkness

Not coming to the Lord Jesus Christ

Not loving others

Living in disobedience to God's Word

Practicing the deeds of darkness

What is the result?

Some claim to have fellowship with God, but walk or live in darkness.

That's not a true situation. It's not true of believers.

Ask what your group learned about sin in these last verses of 1 John 1.

Those who live like Jesus, walk in light, are the ones who have fellowship and have been cleansed from sin by His blood. Those are true believers.

Two more "if we say. . ." statements are in verses 8 and 10. These are about sin. The contrast of saying we have no sin or confessing our sins. And the results are deceiving ourselves or being cleansed from all sin.

"Confess" means "to say the same thing."³

³ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 592.

Those who say the same thing as God does about their sin are the ones who are cleansed from unrighteousness. These are the true believers, the ones who have fellowship with God, the ones who walk in the light.

But those who deny their sin are deceiving themselves. God's Word is not in them—they don't know the truth.

Ask what you group put on their At a Glance for chapter 1.

Maybe something like:

Walk in the light—fellowship with Father and Son

To close your discussion, ask your group if what they say matches what they do. You can also ask them why believers need to know this truth. Give them time to discuss this application.

1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 2

REVIEW

Why was 1 John written?

False prophets and antichrists were trying to deceive the believers, and John wrote to tell them of what they already knew—truth about Jesus Christ.

He wrote to those who believe so they know they have eternal life.
This letter is about doing what's right, loving others, and not continuing in sin.

It's encouragement and warning.

How do 2 and 3 John relate to 1 John?

Both letters are about the truth contrasted with someone trying to deceive believers.

How does 1 John begin?

The first verses identify the author, the apostle John, as an eyewitness of Jesus.

But they also affirm Jesus Christ came in the flesh. John and others not only saw and heard Him, but they also touched His body of flesh and blood.

Chapter 1 is about fellowship with the Father, Son, and other believers.
And then it goes into statements beginning with, "If we say . . ."

At the end of this guide, there is a list which you can use as a visual aid for this discussion.

1 JOHN 2

Verses 1-2

How does this chapter begin? What subject is continued?

One of the reasons John wrote this letter was for the readers not to sin.

Some facts about that are:

If anyone does sin, righteous Jesus is our advocate.
He is the propitiation for the sins of the world.

Ask your group what they learned about Jesus as their Advocate.

He's the righteous Advocate with the Father.

parakletos—"one called alongside to help"¹; "helper . . . one who offers legal aid or who intercedes on behalf of someone else"²

Ask what they learned from the cross-references in John.

The Holy Spirit is our "helper"—*parakletos*, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God.
He is called the Spirit of truth and teaches believers all things.
He testifies / bears witness about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit was sent to believers after Jesus returned to His Father in heaven.
He will be with believers forever.

What does it mean that Jesus is Advocate and the Holy Spirit is Helper?
Give time for your group to discuss how these truths apply to their lives.

Next, ask what they learned about propitiation.

Our righteous advocate Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.
He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

hilasmos—"satisfaction . . . the idea is to placate the wrath of God"³
Jesus satisfied God's wrath with respect to sins.

Romans 3:24-25

God put Jesus forward as a propitiation; Jesus' blood satisfied God's wrath against sin.
God's righteousness took care of all mankind's sins.

Hebrews 2:17

Jesus became a man so He could make propitiation for man's sins.

The only way He was not like other people is that He didn't sin. That's why He was the only one who could pay the price of redemption, His sinless blood.

Leviticus 16

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat covering the ark.

¹ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 296.

² Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 592.

³ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 592.

That offering atoned for the people's sins for that year.

The blood of one sacrifice was shed, and the other was the scapegoat / Azazel which symbolically took the people's sins away. It was a picture of sins being removed.

Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 38:17; 43:25 and Micah 7:18-19

God removes our transgressions as far as the east is from the west.

Isaiah said all his sins were cast behind God's back.

God wipes / blots out transgressions and does not remember sins.

Micah also said God pardons iniquities; He treads them underfoot.

He cast our sins into the depths of the sea.

Give your group time to discuss how far their sins have been removed from them if they are truly saved.

What was necessary to make atonement for sins?

Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22

Life is in the blood. Blood is necessary to make atonement for sins.

Blood cleansed / purified under the Law. Without blood being shed there is no forgiveness of sins.

How did the picture of atonement become reality in the New Testament?

Hebrews 10

The sacrifices, the blood, of animals on the Day of Atonement could not make perfect those who draw near to God. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

But Jesus' blood sanctified, made holy, all believers once for all.

This is the new covenant in His blood.

Verses 19-22 teach that all believers can enter the holy place of God's presence because of the way made by Jesus' blood. He cleansed hearts and consciences of sin.

Lead your discussion back to 1 John 2.

Verses 3-11

What are these verses about?

A new key word begins in verse 3: commandment.

One way believers know for sure that they know God is by keeping His commands.

According to 2 John 4-6, the Father has commanded His children to walk in truth.

And the commandment of loving one another is restated in 2 John.

This is contrasted with the one who only says he knows God—a continuation of 1 John 1:6-10, the statements of what a person says and what he does.

True believers keep His Word and God's love is in them.

Whoever says he “abides” in God must walk in the light.

“Abide,” *meno* basically means to remain, stay, or continue⁴; “to *stay* (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy)”⁵

Contrast this definition with 1 John 2:18-19—those who don't remain.

What are the statements in 1 John 2:4-11 which continue the pattern of contrasts begun in 1:6, “if we say . . .”

“the one who says / whoever says . . .”

4—“I've come to know Him” (ESV—“I know him”)

but doesn't keep His commandments—is a liar, truth not in him

5—people know they are in Him if they keep His Word

6—“he abides in Him”

ought to walk the same way Jesus walked

9—“he is in the light”

but hates his brother—is still in the darkness, not saved

10—the one who loves his brother is in the light

11—the one who hates his brother doesn't know where he's going because he is blind

Give your group time to discuss what all of this teaches about true salvation. Also, discuss how this applies to believers now.

Verses 12-29

Since your group observed all of 1 John 2, you can ask what the rest of the chapter is about and especially what it says about abiding. Refer your group to their list about abiding.

Verses 12-14

John mentions three specific groups of believers to whom he wrote: little children, young men, and fathers. And he describes each group.

God's word abides in the young men.

⁴ Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993), 113.

⁵ James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), G3306.

Verses 15-17

These verses caution believers against loving the world and the things in it above loving God and doing His will. The world is passing away. Eternal life is for the obedient.

Verses 18-29

There is another main contrast in these verses: antichrist(s) and the anointing. Many antichrists exist now. They're the ones who deny Jesus is the Christ. There is "an antichrist" who is coming.

Verse 24 says believers are to let what they heard from the beginning abide in them. If that's the case, they abide in the Son and Father—they have fellowship with Father and Son.

The anointing abides in believers and teaches them so they don't have to be deceived.

An instruction to abide in Him is given in verse 27.
Remain, continue in Him until He comes.

Not only is an antichrist coming, but so is Jesus the Christ.

What is a possible theme for 1 John 2? Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart.

Know God, keep His commands, and abide in Him

In chapters 1 and 2, how did John describe how one can know he has eternal life?
This might be a matter of life and death for someone in your group.

What else does 1 John say about abiding in chapters 3 and 4?

1 John 3:6, 9, 14, 15, 17, 24

No one abiding in Him sins.

No one born of God practices sin because His seed abides in him.

The one who doesn't love, regardless of what he claims, remains in death.
No murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

There's a question about the one having the world's goods and closing his heart when his brother has need. That one doesn't have God's love abiding in him.

Another evidence of abiding in Him is keeping His commands.
That is also what 2:8-10 teaches.

Practicing sin (ESV—keeps on sinning) shows a person isn't abiding in Jesus, 1 John 3:6.

1 John 4:12-13, 15-16

God's love has been perfected in believers because He abides within them.

God's Holy Spirit abides in believers. His love is therefore manifested in a believer's life because of the indwelling Spirit of God's love.

Relate this to 2:9-11.

How do the cross-references in 2 John and the gospel of John compare or add to what 1 John says about abiding? And how does abiding relate to fellowship?

2 John 2 and 9

The truth abides in believers forever.

Anyone going too far and not abiding in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. But the one who abides in the teaching has both Father and Son. He has fellowship.

John 14:23

Jesus taught that true believers—

- Love Him
- Keep His Word
- Are indwelt by the Father and Him in the person of the Holy Spirit

John 15:1-10

This contains an allegory which illustrates how believers abide in Jesus the vine so that they as branches produce much fruit. Fruit is the evidence of the vine. He is the source. He's the life.

That's how John began his letter—Jesus is the manifestation of eternal life.

It was John's joy to tell others about that life. It is fellowship with the Father and Son. It is shared with other believers.

The Holy Spirit is who believers have in common. He's the connection with the Father and Son.

To end this discussion, you can ask your group what abiding has to do with them.

Fellowship

Walk in the light

Cleansed from sin, forgiveness

Keep His commandments, His Word

God's love within

Abiding in Him

Loving brothers

**1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 2:12-27
- The world

REVIEW

Ask why John wrote this letter and what he wrote about.

He stated several purposes for writing 1 John—

that his, our joy be complete
if others have fellowship with the Father and the Son

that believers not sin

because believers know the truth, but there are those who try to deceive them

so believers know they have eternal life

He wrote about eternal life—it's in Jesus.

He wrote about fellowship.

He told believers what and how they can “know” the truth.

He also wrote about sin.

Ask about the flow of thought in 1 John 1 and 2.

The letter begins with statements regarding Jesus' eyewitnesses. They “touched” His fleshly body. He did come in the flesh.

Eternal life was manifested in Him.

John proclaimed the message he heard from Jesus, the message of eternal life.

The result of proclamation is that those who hear might have fellowship with the Father and Son. That is eternal life, true salvation.

Then John began a series of contrasts beginning with statements people might make. The summary of these contrasts from 1:6 to 2:11 is: it's not enough to claim salvation. There is evidence of true salvation.

1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9

All of these are statements of false teaching, presented to deceive.
John presents the truth to refute these false claims.

1 JOHN 2:12-29

Verses 12-14

What is the subject of these verses and how do they fit into John's flow of thought?

John contrasted those who say they know God but don't and those who truly know Him. Then he addressed 3 levels of spiritual maturity among true believers.

Little children—sins forgiven
know God is their Father

Young men— strong
God's Word abides in them
overcome the evil one, the devil

Fathers—know Him who has been / is from the beginning

Ask your group about each growth stage and where they might fit.

New believers are so excited that their sins are forgiven and that they have God as their heavenly Father. They know they are part of His family.

Those more mature know God's Word and it dwells within them. That makes them strong and helps them to more and more overcome the devil.

The mature in the faith are the ones who "know" the Lord Jesus Christ, the one from the beginning. They know Him from His Word and by the experiences of their Christian lives with Him.

"Know" is repeated in 2:3-5 and 11. There is evidence of truly "knowing" Him. Growth is a natural result.

Verses 15-17

What are these verses about? Discuss the word studies.

As a visual aid, you might draw a rough diagram of the world and list the main points relative to true believers and the world.

Believers are not to love the world or the things in it.

If a person loves the world, God's love is not in him.
The things of the world are not from Him.

The lust / desires of the flesh and of the eyes and the pride of life

lust / desires—"craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden"¹

flesh—In this context, not the physical substance of the human body, but "the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence."²

boastful pride—"a state of pride or arrogance"³; "in regard to one's possessions *false pride, conceit, boasting*"⁴

Strong desires of the flesh—possibly those which originate within a person.
Strong desires of the eyes—possibly those which originate from without by sight.
Boasting and pride about the substance of one's life and/ or possessions.

Ask about examples of the three—lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, boastful pride of life.

There is a contrast in verse 17. The world and its desires are passing away, but the one who does God's will abides forever.

What else does 1 John say about the world?

The first time John used "world" is in 1 John 2:2.
Jesus died for the sins of the whole world—everyone in the world.

3:1, 13

The world doesn't know God nor those who belong to Him.
The world hates believers.

3:17

This speaks of having possessions of the world and not sharing them if another has need.
That brings up a question: Does God's love abide in that one? If not, he's not saved.

4:1-5

False prophets, the spirit of antichrist, are in the world.
The world listens to them because they speak the things of the world.

¹ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995), G1939.

² James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995), G4561.

³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 764.

⁴ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 42.

Believers overcome them by the indwelling Holy Spirit who is greater than the spirit in the world.

4:9, 17

God sent Jesus into the world so those who believe can have eternal life.

God is love, and believers are to be like Him in the world.

Jesus demonstrated God and love to the world, and those who are His are to do the same.

5:4-5, 19

Those born of God, Christians, overcome the world by faith.

But the whole world lies in the evil one's power, Satan or the devil.

Then ask what they learned from the cross-references on the world.

Mark 4:1-20

Jesus taught parables about the kingdom of God.

One of those was what is called "the parable of the sower."

The worries / cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches and desire for other things can choke the Word of God out of a person's life. If that happens, then that one never was truly saved although he might have said he was.

Mark 8:35-37

It profits nothing for a person to gain the important things of the world if he forfeits his soul in the process.

Romans 13:14

Make no provision for the flesh. Don't fulfill its desires.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ as prevention.

Give your group time to discuss relevant application at any point in this discussion.

Galatians 5:16-26

Walk by the Spirit and you won't gratify the flesh's desires. This is the same as what Romans 13:14 says.

The deeds of the flesh are evident.

Let your group discuss each one in the list so that they recognize what they are.

Then draw attention to the result of a person who lives according to the flesh in verse 21.

They won't inherit God's kingdom—not saved.

Ephesians 2:1-3

All believers formerly / once lived in the lusts / passions of their flesh indulging / carrying out its desires. Those who live like that walk according to the course of this world and don't know God.

Contrast with how believers live based on Galatians 5:16-25. Christians walk by the Spirit. They put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 13:14, to make no provision for the flesh. If one makes no provision, then the lust of the flesh is not fulfilled.

Titus 2:11-14

God's grace of salvation instructs believers to deny worldly desires (ESV—trains believers to renounce worldly passions).

James 4:4

Those who are friends with the world are God's enemies.

John 15:18-16:1, 33 and 17:1-26

The world hates believers because it hates Jesus.

He chooses believers out of the world. They're not part of it anymore.
But they still live in the world, and they'll have tribulation in it.

Jesus overcame the world, and so do those born of Him.

Jesus prayed for His own to be protected from the evil one, but not for them to be taken out of the world.

Ask your group how all this relates to them. If needed, you can ask the following:

According to 1 John and the cross-references, what is true if the practice of your life is what's described in 1 John 2:14-15?

Think of the three groups described in verses 12-14. How do these relate to the believer and to verses 15-17?

Verses 18-27

Ask what the main contrast is in these verses and what your group learned from their study.

Antichrist(s)—one who opposes Christ⁵

⁵ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G500.

One is coming, but many are already in the world in the form of false prophets.
They don't remain / continue, abide.
They don't confess Jesus as coming in the flesh.
They try to deceive true believers.

Second John 7 equates deceivers with antichrist.

Anointing / have been anointed

All believers have the anointing of God's Holy Spirit.
He teaches them all things as He abides in them.
They know the truth and don't have to believe lies.

To end, ask how this lesson relates to a believer's life.

**1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 3

REVIEW

Why was 1 John written?

The apostle John wrote about what he had seen and heard from Jesus so his, our joy would be complete. He desired that others have the same fellowship with the Father and Son as he did.

He also wrote to
Keep believers from sin
Keep them from deception

He wrote so they would know that they have eternal life.

At this point, you can ask your group what they learned about “know” in 1 John 2. Tell them to look at the chart in the lesson as a visual aid.

Believers can know they’ve come to know Him if they keep His commands
They can know they’re in Him if they walk in the manner / way He walked
They can know it’s the last hour because many antichrists have appeared / come

Discuss the chart entries from chapter 3 as your group discusses the chapter content.

1 JOHN 3

Verses 1-3

What is the connection between 1 John 2:28-29 and 3:1-3?

Chapter 2 ends with the instruction to abide in Him so that when He appears believers will have confidence and not shrink in shame. Then it says the one practicing righteousness is born of Him.

Practicing righteousness until His coming is evidence that one is born of Him.

This chapter begins with the Father’s great love for His children, those born of Him. The world doesn’t know His children because it doesn’t know Him.

There is a contrast: now believers are His children.

What believers will be has not yet appeared / been manifested.
When Jesus appears, then God's children will be like Him.
This hope causes believers to purify themselves.

Verses 4-10

What and who are these verses about?

Those who have a lifestyle of sin are practicing lawlessness, breaking God's laws.

The Greek word most often translated "sin" is *hamartia*, "wrongdoing."¹

Jesus appeared in His first coming to take away sin, to destroy the works of the devil.
No one who keeps on sinning knows God or abides in Him.

John didn't want the believers he wrote to be deceived.
The one who practices righteousness is righteous like Jesus.
Those are the people who are born of God, 2:29. Compare this with 1 John 1:6-10.

The one who lives a lifestyle of sin is the devil's child, because the devil has sinned from the beginning.

Ask your group what they learned from their study about the devil.

Ezekiel 28 and Genesis 2-3

Sin began with the devil choosing his will instead of God's.
He became proud of his perfection in wisdom and beauty, and his wisdom was corrupted.
He was then filled with violence.
The devil introduced sin to mankind when he tempted Eve in the garden of Eden.

He questioned what God had said.
He still does the same thing. He questions God's Word.
Then he contradicted what God said.
He lied to Eve when he told her she wouldn't die for disobedience.
He's the father of lies and continues to lie to whoever will listen to him.

The devil lied when he said Adam and Eve would be like God if they disobeyed Him. Instead their sin separated them from God. They no longer had the fellowship with Him that they'd had before sin. They wanted to hide from Him.

What is sin's punishment or effect?

Adam's transgression brought death to all mankind, Romans 5:12-19.
Since his sin, all men have sinned. None are without it.

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 772.

Jesus' one act of righteousness brought life to all who accept it by believing on Him—redemption through His blood, forgiveness of all our transgressions.

Lead the discussion back to 1 John 3. What did John write about the devil's children and God's?

John says children are obvious / evident.

Those born of God cannot practice sin because His seed abides in them.
Those who belong to the devil don't practice righteousness or love their brothers.

Ask your group how this relates to them. Give time for discussion. What does it mean to practice righteousness?

Verses 11-12

Who is the example in these verses? Discuss the cross-reference also.

The devil's child doesn't practice righteousness and doesn't love his brother.
John's example is Cain, who murdered his righteous brother, because he was evil and doing evil deeds. He was of the evil one.

Genesis 4

Cain was Adam and Eve's first son. He became a worker of the ground and brought an offering of its fruit to the Lord. When the Lord had no regard for his offering, he was very angry. The Lord told Cain that he must master / rule over sin.

But instead, he killed his brother whose offering God had regarded. Cain went out / away from the presence of the Lord.

The believers had heard from the beginning that they were to love, present tense, practice love toward one another. One who hates is a murderer, and no murderer has eternal life.

Third John contrasts Diotrephes with Demetrius. Believers are to support men like Demetrius, but not imitate evil as Diotrephes had done. He didn't accept the truth.

Verses 13-22

What are believers to know from these verses? How does John continue his flow of thought?

Don't be surprised. The world will hate God's children.

Tell your group to look at their chart in the lesson. What did they note from these verses?

God's children know they have passed out of death into life, because they love the brethren. This is the evidence. All through 1 John, he shows the evidence of being a true child of God.

The contrast is with the one who is a child of the devil. The evidence is they hate their brother. Whoever hates is a murderer and abides in death, no eternal life abiding in him.

The love of God doesn't abide in one who sees a brother's need and closes his heart. God's children love in deed and in truth.

What do verses 16-22 say about the heart?

If a person closes his heart toward his brother's need, God's love is not in his heart.

Assurance comes from the heart, and the heart can condemn.

Verse 19, believers know by this—by the outward evidence of loving in deed and truth—that they are of the truth and assure / reassure their hearts before Him.

Hearts are assured by looking at the facts, not by feelings.

Believers can know certain things for sure.

They might feel condemned in heart at times, but they are not.

If the heart doesn't condemn because of standing on the truth of God's Word, then there is confidence before God. Children of God keep His commands and receive whatever they ask from Him.

1 John 2:28

Believers have confidence at Jesus' coming.

1 John 4:17

God's love is perfected in believers so they have confidence in the day of judgment.

1 John 5:14

There is also confidence for believers in making prayer requests of the Lord. It's knowing that if they ask according to His will, He hears them and grants the requests.

Verses 23-24

How does this chapter end?

God's command is:

Believe in Jesus' name

Love one another

Believers can know He abides in them by the Spirit He has given them.

What is a possible theme for this chapter of 1 John?
Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart.

Practice righteousness—born of God; practice sin—don't know God

You can end your discussion by asking what your group noted on the chart from chapters 4–5.

What I can know	How I can know it
The Spirit of God	confesses Jesus has come in the flesh
The spirit of truth	the one who knows God listens to us
The spirit of error	the one who doesn't know God doesn't listen to us
I abide in Him and He in me	He has given me of His Spirit
I love His children	I love Him and keep His commands
I have eternal life	by what John has written

Encourage your group to examine their lives in light of these truths. Whose child are they? If they know they are children of God, can they use these Scriptures to share truth with another?

**1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 4

To begin this discussion, you can ask what 1 John 4 is about.

Verses 1-6 test the spirits

Verses 7-21 love

REVIEW

Tell your group to look at the list they made about love, along with their 1 John Observation Worksheets. Then ask about the main subjects in chapters 1–3, and discuss what these chapters say about love.

- 1 fellowship—with the Father, Son, and one another

light—God is light; walk in the light

sin—If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;
if we confess our sin, He'll forgive and cleanse us.
- 2 know—We know we know Him if we keep His commandments
 God's love is perfected in the one who keeps His Word.
 We know we're in Him if we walk in the same manner as He walked.
 Writing you, fathers, because you know Him.

abide—One who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner
 One who loves his brother abides in the light.
 Don't love the world. If do, God's love not within.
 Let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.
 The anointing you received from Him abides in you.
- 3 Father bestowed love on His children.

sin—children of God and children of devil are obvious / evident
 The one who practices sin and doesn't love belongs to the devil.
 Not love—abides in death.
 That one is not born of God, does not belong to Him, not saved.

We know love because Jesus laid down His life, so believers should love one another. God's love supplies a brother's needs. John calls believers to love in deed and truth, not merely with words.

1 JOHN 4

Verses 1-6

How do these verses relate to the end of chapter 3?

In 3:24, John wrote that believers can know He abides within by the Spirit He's given.

Then he warns in 4:1 not to believe every spirit.

What is the contrast in these verses? As your group discusses, you might list the main points of the contrast on a visual aid. See an example at the end of the guide.

John wrote these verses as a warning, so believers are not deceived by false prophets. They are to test the spirits to see if they are from God.

There are false prophets in the world with the spirit of antichrist. John contrasted them with those who have the Spirit of God within.

The antichrist had not come, but the spirit was already in the world.

Believers can recognize

the spirit of the antichrist—every spirit that doesn't confess Jesus.

the Spirit of God—every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

The false prophets with the spirit of the antichrist
are from the world,
speak as from the world,
and are listened to by the world.

But believers have overcome the false prophets, because the Spirit of God in them is greater than the spirit of antichrist within false prophets, which is the spirit of error.

John said they are from God, and are listened to by those who know God. This is the way to recognize the spirit of truth.

Compare with the warnings in 2 and 3 John.

Watch yourselves; many deceivers are in the world.
Don't participate with those who bring you teaching that goes too far.
Be careful around those who want to be first and don't receive brothers as they should.

Verses 7-21

Ask your group what they learned from these verses and the related cross-references.

As they discuss these verses, keep asking them what they personally learned for life from this study on love. Make this a very practical time for them.

Love is from God, and God is love.
Everyone who loves with His love is His child and knows Him.

Jesus is the demonstration of God's love. He sent His Son to be the propitiation for sins and so believers have life through the Son.

Genesis 22

God asked Abraham to offer his only son Isaac whom he loved. Abraham was willing to do this, even as God was willing to sacrifice His only Son, John 3:16.

Romans 5:6-12

God loved when people were helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies, spiritually dead, and destined for His wrath.

His love was poured out in believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Believers are commanded to love one another.
And His love is perfected in His children.

perfected—"to complete, finish, accomplish . . . make mature"¹

2 John 1-8

John said he loved in truth, and so do all who know the truth.
Love begins with the Father and Son.
Love is walking in His commandments. This is also what 1 John 2 says.

You might ask from 4:13-15 how believers know they abide in Him and He in them.

- Because He has given His Spirit. "Given" is perfect tense, meaning it happened in the past with the results continuing into the present.

Romans 8:9, 16

The Spirit testifies with believers' spirits that they're God's children.
If one doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he's not His.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, a pledge / guarantee of their inheritance.

¹ Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993), 180.

- Confess Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark 12:28-31 and Luke 10:25-37

The two greatest commandments are:

Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

A neighbor is anyone God puts in one's path.

The lawyer asked what he should do to inherit eternal life.

First John says that when believers love, it shows they're born of God and know God. It shows believers have eternal life.

Lead your discussion back to 1 John 4. Ask about verses 16-21.

Believers abide in love, and perfect love casts out fear.

God's love is perfected so believers have confidence and no fear regarding punishment on the day of judgment. Christians live a life of loving others now, and have no fear of punishment from God on the day of judgment. He loves His children.

Verse 19 says God loved; believers love because He first loved.

Verses 20 and 21 restate that God's children are to love one another.

Verses 12 and 20 state that no one has seen God. But His children love Him although they've not seen Him.

And verse 20 is another "if someone says" statement. Saying is not enough. There has to be evidence of God's love within coming out to others.

What does 1 John 5:1-3 say about love?

The one who loves the Father also loves the child born of Him.
Keeping His commandments is again connected with love.

Ask your group what they put on their At a Glance as a theme for chapter 4.

Maybe something like:

Spirit of God, spirit of antichrist; if love God, love brothers also

As you end your discussion, give your group time to share what has helped them understand God's love and how to apply what they've learned about it.

Test the spirits

false prophets

from the world

don't confess Jesus came in flesh

spirit of antichrist

world listens to

spirit of error

believers

from God

confess Jesus came in flesh

Spirit of God

believers listen to

spirit of truth

**1 JOHN AND 2 & 3 JOHN
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 John 5

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you might ask what subjects are continued from 1 John 4 into chapter 5. Or ask about 5:1 and how it relates to chapter 4.

There is a continuation from 4:7 about those who are born of God and love.

God is love.
Love is from God.

God loves us.
We should love one another.

The one who does not love does not know God.

Those who are born of God love Him and others born of Him.

1 John 4:15-16 says the confession of one born of God is proven by his abiding in love.

Verse 21 concludes with the commandment that love is not only toward God, but also one's brothers.

1 JOHN 5

Verses 1-5

What other key word is repeated in verses 1-13? How does it relate to those born of God? There is a short list at the end of this guide which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

“Believe” or “faith” is used seven times in these verses.
Those who believe Jesus is the Christ are born of God.
Compare this with 1 John 3:23.

What does 1 John 5:1-3 say about love?

Although 4:21 says loving brothers is a command from God, 5:1 presents it as a fact of being born of Him, of believing.

Those who believe are born of God.

Those who are born of God love the Father and others born of Him.

NOTE: Some might say the one born of Him in verse 1 is Jesus. Whoever loves the Father, loves Jesus—the one born of Him—also. But verse 2 indicates other believers.

Verse 2 presents another “By this we know” statement.

If one loves God and obeys His commands, that one loves the children of God.

Then verse 3 gives some explanation—another “this is” statement.

Keeping His commands is loving God.
Obedience is the manifestation of loving Him.
His love through believers is manifested to others.

That’s the end of “love” in 1 John, but it’s not the end of those born of God.

What do verses 4-5 say about those who are born of God.

They overcome the world. Relate this to 1 John 2:15-17.

By faith
By believing that Jesus is the Son of God

Therefore, all believers are overcomers.

Ask your group what they learned from their study of overcomers.

“Overcome”—*nikao*, means “to conquer”¹ or “be victorious over”²; it means to win or defeat.³

1 John 2:13-14

The “young men” in the faith have overcome the evil one.
Believers not only overcome the world, but also the devil.

1 John 4:4

From 3:24 John taught that believers can know God abides in them by His Spirit. Then 4:1-4 says believers overcome the spirits of false prophets by the Holy Spirit. He is greater in believers than the spirit of antichrist in false prophets in the world.

¹ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic, and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G3528.

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989), 1:500.

³Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 271.

Believers overcome false teaching by God’s Spirit within them. They have the Spirit of truth to overcome the spirit of error.

Since John is primarily the one who used overcome / conquer in the New Testament, ask about the first time he used it and how it relates to what he wrote in 1 John.

John 16:33

When Jesus told the eleven disciples He was about to leave them, they were troubled. Then he told them to take courage because, “I have overcome the world.”

That is why all believers overcome the world. They have the Spirit of Jesus dwelling within them.

What did Paul and Peter say when they used the word “overcome”?

Romans 12:21

Believers can keep this command because of the Spirit within them.
Overcome evil with good.

Romans 8:37-39

Believers overwhelmingly conquer (ESV—*are more than conquerors*) through Christ. And nothing can separate them from His love—no trials or powers, present or future.

Verses 5-12

Lead your discussion back to 1 John 5. What are verses 5-12 about?

NOTE: There are varying interpretations about the three, and commentators disagree.

This tells of the witnesses, which testify to who Jesus is—flesh and blood man and God, the Christ.

“Testify” is *marturéō*—“to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something.”⁴

John began this letter with his own eyewitness account of the fact that Jesus became a man. But Jesus is also the Christ, God Himself, the one in whom is eternal life.

All three witnesses are from God.

The Spirit of truth testifies that Jesus is who John wrote that He is.
Jesus was a man, but also He is God.

NOTE: There are various interpretations in commentaries. It’s best to stay with what is clearly understood from this text and not discuss too much what the water and blood refer to.

⁴ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G3140.

Those who believe in Him have eternal life because life is in Him.

Verses 13-17

How do these verses begin? Ask your group about the flow of thought in these verses.

John wrote to those who believe so they know they have eternal life.
Those who know that have confidence to ask Him because He hears them.
Knowing He hears also brings knowing He grants the requests they ask.

If a believer sees a brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will give life to that brother.

But he didn't say one should make a request for a person sinning to death.

No one born of God sins—continues in sin, 1 John 3.

God keeps those born of Him, and the evil one doesn't touch them.
But the world lies in the power of the evil one.
The Son gives understanding to believers to know Him, and that is eternal life.

Then John ended the letter with a warning against idolatry.

What is the subject in verses 14-16?

There is a list at the end of this guide which you can use as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

“Ask(ed)” and “request / pray” are used six times in these verses.

There is a condition for asking—“according to His will.”

At this point, you might ask how one can know God's will, according to 1 John.

Believers have God's Spirit within them to guide. He will tell what God's will is in all situations. The believer's responsibility is to abide in Him.

Also, God's will is stated in His Word. One of the reasons John wrote to believers is because they knew the truth—he wanted them to know more.

What else does 1 John say about asking?

3:21-22

Another condition, or a different way of saying a similar thing, is that the one who asks of God keeps His commands and does things pleasing to Him.

A life of obedience and knowing God's will are part of asking and receiving from Him.

What did Jesus say about asking?

John 14:14; 16:24

Ask in His name.

In His name—who He is

Asking in His name is asking what He would ask.

John 15:7

The condition is to abide in Him—the same thing John wrote in 1 John.

But also His words must abide in the believer.

That’s how one knows who He is and what His will is.

Matthew 21:18-22; Hebrews 11:6

Jesus said a necessary ingredient in asking is “believing” or faith, as Hebrews also says.

Believe He is able to do what He’s promised.

What did Peter write in 1 Peter 3 about asking?

Verse 7—if a husband does not live with his wife in an understanding way, then his prayers can be hindered.

Verse 12—God answers the prayers of the righteous.

That’s almost the same thing John wrote in 1 John 3:22.

There is a contrast with those who do evil—unbelievers. God’s face is against them.

What are reasons for not receiving what one asks from God?

James

Wrong motives, self-centered motives

So having the right motive corresponds with doing what pleases God and asking.

John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9, 13; Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18

The wicked

Sinners

Those who turn away from listening to His law

These describe unbelievers.

Give your group time to share how they can apply what they learned about prayer.

Lead the discussion back to 1 John 5 and ask about verses 16-17. How do these verses continue from verses 13-15?

One thing believers are to ask of God is for a brother who sins—not to death.

And God will answer that request and give life.

Since both verses 13 and 20 mention eternal life, life in verse 16 might also refer to the same.

There is sin not leading to death.

But John did not say to make request for a person who sins to death.

One possibility is that this is the sin of unbelief
—not believing Jesus came in the flesh and is also the Son of God.
—speaking of a non-believer in contrast to making request for a Christian brother.

NOTE: Some think this refers to a Christian who has committed a particular sin worthy of physical death.

Ask your group what they think based on their study, and why.

Then ask if they think any of the following cross-references relate to 1 John 5:16-17, and why or why not.

Acts 5:1-11

The text describes Ananias as a man, not a brother or Christian or believer.
The devil himself filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.

He and his wife died for lying to the Spirit of God, who was in Peter and the other believers. Those born of God

This might be what 1 John is referring to as a sin to death.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

This refers to one being delivered to Satan.

The immoral man in this text is described as a “wicked / evil man” in verse 13 and “a so-called brother (ESV—bears the name of brother)” in verse 11. True believers are not described this way.

Paul’s hope for putting this man out of the church was to stop the spread of sin within the church. Verse 5 presents hope that the result will be this man’s salvation.

1 Timothy 1:19-20

Hymenaeus and Alexander rejected the faith—they were unbelievers.
Paul said he handed them over to Satan so they would learn not to blaspheme.

1 Corinthians 11:20-34

This is a warning regarding taking the Lord’s supper in an unworthy manner.
A believer is to examine himself and help to judge, make a decision, regarding others within the body as well. The Lord’s supper is a sober celebration.

The church at Corinth had suffered consequences of not judging themselves properly and thereby being judged by God, but not condemned like the world. Some were weak, some were sick and some had died, fallen asleep in Jesus.

Paul said it was the Lord's discipline.

Hebrews 10:26-31

If someone who knows the truth continues in willful sin, he faces judgment. And these verses give a severe warning to that one.

NOTE: Your group might not come to a conclusion or agreement on the interpretation of 1 John 5:16 about a sin leading to death. Don't try to force a conclusion or agreement. And don't let them get into a debate which leads away from the rest of your discussion.

Verses 18-21

How did John end this letter? What is repeated in these verses?

“we know”

- No one born of God sins—continuous action.

Jesus keeps / protects those who are born of God, and the devil does touch not them.

Touch—“hold on to”⁵

NOTE: Some translations say the believer keeps himself.

- Believers are of God
and
the whole world lies in the power of evil one.
- The Son of God came and gives understanding to know Him.
God's Son Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

Since He is the true God, guard yourselves from idols, false gods.

Ask your group how “knowing” these things can help them be more confident, more secure in their life.

What is a possible the theme for 1 John 5?

Testimony = God has given eternal life in His Son; ask according to His will

If you have time, ask what this study has meant to them.

⁵ J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) (GGK721). (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

Those born of God

Believe Jesus is the Christ

Love

Know

Observe His commands

Overcome by faith
the world
the devil

Ask

With confidence

According to His will
Keep His commands, please Him

In Jesus' name
Abide in Him
His words abiding in you

With right motives