

LIVING IN THE LOVE OF GOD

1 JOHN

God is light
in him there is no darkness at all.

**Thoughts,
Notes and
Answers.**



KIAMA ANGLICAN
CHURCHES

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Living in the Love of God

This term we turn from Jesus' words and actions in Matthew's Gospel to the 'letter' of encouragement written for those who follow Jesus some 50 years later, written by another of Jesus' apostles, John.

These words speak to us of the basic beliefs we have about Jesus, about the obedience Jesus requires, and the love Jesus shows and expects of us.

Here are the words of an elderly servant of his Lord, the wisdom of one who has fought the good fight and goes on fighting it as he looks forward to the Lord's return.

From these words let us all learn right Belief, humble Obedience, and lived out Love.

Greg Holmes, April 2019

Programme

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Sun 5 May	1	Walking in God's Light - 1 "God is light"	1:1-2:2	4
Sun 12 May	2	Walking in God's Light - 2 "Walk as Jesus did."	2:3-14	5
Sun 19 May	3	Practising God's Truth - 1 "Do not love the world"	2:15-27	6
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Sun 23 Jun	8	Sharing God's Victory - 1 "everyone born of God overcomes the world"	5:1-12	11
Sun 30 Jun	9	Sharing God's Victory - 2 "He who has the Son has life"	5:13-21	12

RESOURCES

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Smalley, S.S. *1,2,3 John* (Word Biblical Commentary) (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1993)

Stott, J.R.W. *"The Epistles of John: An Introduction and Commentary"* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1976).

Also the outline of The Johannine Epistles on the Bible Project website. <https://thebibleproject.com/all-videos/>

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PLEASE NOTE :

It is probably worth my while explaining what I attempt to do in these 'notes'. My first work on them is to ensure that you can actually answer the questions. It is easy to ask questions that no-one is able to interpret. I then attempt to give some thoughts of my own on each question and then to bring to bear materials from my reading on the topic. Sometimes these are direct answers to the questions but, also sometimes, they are extra, I hope, relevant ideas.

It proves impossible in these studies to delve into all of them and I would encourage all people who lead or indeed do the studies to look more widely than the questions and allow Jesus' words to speak to our minds, hearts and lives.

THE SECTIONS OF THE STUDIES

It is good to read the passage for the week at the start of each study. Each of these passages is relatively short so reading them aloud is worthwhile.

THE TEXT

These look at the basic ideas in the passage. I would recommend that each week you do these simply to get the flow of the text and its important points.

CONNECTIONS

As the heading suggests, these dig deeper into the themes of the passage or look more widely at Scripture. It is probably among these that you need to make some choices. Of course if you decide to have a go at them all I am sure it will be worthwhile.

IMPACT.

It has been suggested that rather than think about how we **apply** the Scriptures we should ask how they **impact** us in our daily lives as Jesus' followers.

These Questions seek to get us to think about this.

We need to make the rubber of the 'idea' hit the road of our lives, thoughts and actions. - One of the problems in writing 'application' or 'impact' type questions is not knowing where all the individuals in groups etc. are up to. If you can see a better application of the material - DO IT. - The important thing is to relevantly think about the impact the passage has on us.

Please note that my answers below are not the only 'correct' answers or what you are trying to get to in the study. I have set them out as a guide to my thinking only and an assistance to you.

These Notes are meant to be the start of the assistance I am willing to give in regard to the studies. If you need anything further DO NOT hesitate to contact me.

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Some Background.

The Author

Whilst there has been some discussion about who the author of this letter is (he is not named), ancient tradition and much modern scholarship has come to the conclusion that the author is John the Elder (named in 2,3 John) who is also the Apostle John who wrote John's gospel.

It is most probably that John was at this time an elder (in both position and age) in the Church at Ephesus (in modern day Turkey) and the letter was written in the 80s or 90s AD.

The Literature

Strictly speaking this is not an epistle, it does not start like a letter, it does not end like a letter and in many ways does not develop like a letter. However it has been included in our Scriptures amongst the epistles (letters). It does seem best to think of it a 'sermon' or 'exhortation' that was written to be copied, taken and read aloud in a number of churches in and around Ephesus.

The Theological Issue

The earthly motivating issue seems to have been the need to respond to some influential false teachers who have been denying the nature of Jesus as the incarnated God. "It was proposed that either Christ was not really human or that the Christ merely came upon the human Jesus at his baptism and left before his death. So in effect they denied the divine/human nature of Jesus or what we call the incarnation. This in turn led them into problems in the area of morality which they regarded somewhat indifferently." *(Gabbott)*

Also Mark Dever writes; *"Apparently, some people were teaching that God never really took on human flesh. They said that human flesh is sinful, evil and bad. So God may have appeared as a human in Jesus, but he did not really take on flesh. Basically these false teachers separate the human Jesus of flesh and the divine Christ of spirit"*

And Constantine Campbell writes: *"But John's first concern is not to correct the false teachers but to protect his readers, his beloved children. The polemical elements of the letter serve this pastoral end, as John writes so that they would not be led astray (3:7) and would have assurance of eternal life (5:13)."*

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Some Similarities between John's Gospel and 1 John

This chart looks at some parallels of theme and language between John's Letter and his Gospel 'The similarity between Gospel and letter is considerably greater than that between the third Gospel and the Acts, which are known to have come from the same pen' (J. R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John*, TNTC [IVP 1988], p. 28).

Gospel of John	1 John
<p><i>John 1:1</i> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <i>John 1:14</i> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. <i>John 15:26</i> "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. <i>John 15:27</i> And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.</p>	<p><i>1 John 1:1</i> What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have perceived, and our hands have touched—this we proclaim about the Word of Life.</p>
<p><i>John 3:21</i> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light</p>	<p><i>1 John 1:6</i> If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and walk in the darkness, we lie and we do not do the truth.</p>
<p><i>John 1:5</i> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:8</i> ... because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.</p>
<p><i>John 8:12</i> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."</p>	<p><i>1 John 1:5</i> And this is the message that we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. <i>1 John 2:9</i> The one who says, "I am in the light," and hates their brother or sister is still in the darkness.</p>
<p><i>John 1:12-13</i> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.</p>	<p><i>1 John 5:1</i> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.</p>
<p><i>John 15:12</i> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.</p>	<p><i>1 John 3:23</i> And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another, just as he gave the command to us.</p>
<p><i>John 15:7</i> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.</p>	<p><i>1 John 3:24</i> And the one who keeps his commands remains in him [God], and he himself in them; and in this way we know that he remains in us: from the Spirit, whom he gave to us.</p>
<p><i>John 13:34</i> A new command I give you.</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:8</i> Yet I am writing to you a new command.</p>
<p><i>John 14:16</i> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:1</i> But if someone should sin, we have a <i>paraclete</i> with the Father—the righteous Jesus Christ.</p>
<p><i>John 17:3</i> Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:25</i> And this is the promise that he himself promised us—eternal life. <i>1 John 5:11</i> And this is the testimony: that God has given eternal life to us and this life is in his Son.</p>
<p><i>John 14:6</i> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:23</i> No one who denies the Son has the Father either. The one who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.</p>
<p><i>John 13:30</i> As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.</p>	<p><i>1 John 2:19</i> They have gone out from us, but they were not of us.</p>
<p><i>John 20:31</i> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.</p>	<p><i>1 John 5:13</i> These things I write to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you might know that you have eternal life.</p>

From: Jobes, K.H. [1,2,3 John](#) (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2014)

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From Morris, L. "1 John" in Carson, D.A.; France, R.T.; Motyer, J.A.; Wenham, G.J. (Eds) New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition) (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

Introduction

This writing is usually called an 'epistle' or letter, but it has neither address nor signature. Indeed, it lacks so many characteristics of a letter that some scholars take 'epistle' as no more than a courtesy title; they see it as a written sermon rather than a letter. Against this, however, now and then there appear passages which justify us in seeing it as a real letter (*e.g.* 2:1, 26), although a letter with some unusual features. Perhaps the explanation is that it was originally meant for more than one community.

Authorship

The traditional view is that the author was John the apostle and the marked tone of authority throughout the letter agrees with this. No other author was suggested in antiquity and perhaps only an apostolic figure could have sent out such a letter without putting his name to it. The writer was evidently an eyewitness of at least some of the things Jesus did (1:1-3; the views that 'we' means 'all Christians', or that it is simply a literary device seem untenable). The style and thought-forms resemble those of the fourth gospel, and all agree that there must be some connection. It has usually been thought that the one author wrote both, in which case everything hinges on the authorship of that gospel. Some critics, however, hold that the author of one of these writings was a disciple of the author of the other; it is not uncommon for people to think of a 'school' of Christians of a Johannine type, one of whom wrote this letter. Such critics hold that there are differences of style (*e.g.* fewer compound words in the letter) and of theology (*e.g.* a different view of the significance of the death of Jesus). While such differences should not be minimized, they do not seem great enough to demand diversity of authorship. They may be accounted for by the different purposes of the two writings and their different forms. 'The similarity between Gospel and letter is considerably greater than that between the third Gospel and the Acts, which are known to have come from the same pen' (J. R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John, TNTC* [IVP 1988], p. 28). Raymond E. Brown, who thinks it probable that there were different authors, agrees that the evidence is such that the gospel and the letters may have been written at different times by the same man (*The Epistles of John* [Doubleday, 1982], pp. 14-30). No conclusive argument for different authors seems to have been produced.

Some critics see 'John the elder' (*cf.* 2 Jn. 1; 3 Jn. 1) as the author of the gospel or of the letter (or 2 and 3 John, or Revelation), some of both. This rather shadowy figure, however, is not a likely candidate. It cannot be demonstrated that a John the elder, as distinct from John the apostle, ever existed. And if he did, the reasons for connecting him with this writing are not convincing, not nearly as convincing as the ancient tradition which ascribes it to the apostle.

While, then, the letter makes no claim about its authorship, and while the case cannot be proved beyond doubt, the most reasonable hypothesis is that it came from the pen of the apostle John.

Occasion

It is clear from the letter that its readers were being confronted with a form of false teaching which denied the incarnation. This error was evidently held by people who had been in the church but who had now seceded, for John speaks of them as 'going out' (2:19; 4:1). In the second century there appeared systems of thought now called Gnosticism, systems which took over both Christian and pagan ideas. They emphasized

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knowledge (Gk. *gnōsis*), and taught a way of salvation known only to the initiates. This included release from the material prison of the body, and an upward rise to God. There is dispute about how early Gnosticism appeared. It is very probable that it was much later than the time when this letter was written, but it did not spring out of empty air. Many of the teachings later included in the fully developed Gnostic systems were in circulation in the first century.

John was opposing some such system, a system that included the idea that matter is inherently evil. God, being good, can have nothing to do with evil matter it was claimed. Therefore, he could not have been incarnate in Jesus Christ. Some held that Christ only *seemed* to live in the flesh (they were called 'Docetists' from the Gk. *dokein*, 'to seem'). But it is probably too much to affirm that John is confronting Docetists, for there is nothing in this letter about a phantom body or the like. What he opposed seems to have been an early stage of the heresy that was to develop into Docetism. [p. 1397] People were denying the incarnation and John took this as very serious. Its effect was to take the heart out of Christianity, for if Christ did not really become a man and did not really die for us, then no atonement has been made for our sins. So John emphasized the reality of the incarnation. He also stressed the importance of upright living, and it appears that in their emphasis on knowledge some of the heretics held that conduct did not matter much. John made it clear that conduct is very important.

It would be wrong, however, to think that this letter is no more than a refutation of heresy. There is a very positive aim, as John tells us himself. He writes 'so that you also may have fellowship with us... to make our joy complete' (1:3-4). He makes this more specific when he says, 'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life' (5:13). We may contrast this with the aim of the gospel: 'these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name' (Jn. 20:31). Whereas the gospel has an evangelistic aim, the letter is thus directed rather at bringing believers assurance and a true knowledge of what the faith implies. 'The Gospel contains "signs" to evoke faith (20:30-31), and the letter tests by which to judge it' (J. R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John*, TNTC [IVP, 1988], p. 26). John wrote to take away his readers' anxieties as they came to realize what it meant to be a Christian. 'In the first Epistle, John sets forth three marks of a true knowledge of God and of fellowship with God... These marks are, first, righteousness of life, second, brotherly love, and third, faith in Jesus as God incarnate' (*Search the Scriptures*, 1967, p. 289). These three themes recur constantly.

The letter is dominated by two great thoughts: God is light (1:5), and God is love (4:8, 16). God is the source of light to the minds and of warmth to the hearts of his children. These children should accordingly live up to the highest standard; there is constant emphasis on this (*e.g.* 2:1-6; 3:3, 6, 9; 5:1-3). But the letter contains no harsh admonition. Rather, the writer addressed his readers with fatherly care and tender concern: 'little children'; 'beloved'; 'little children, let no one deceive you'; 'little children, keep yourselves from idols'.

Study 1: 1 JOHN 1:1-2:2

Walking in God's Light – 1: "God is light"

Before You Start

This is not a long letter and it is worth hearing in full before we start dividing it up. Take the time to read, or listen to, the whole 'letter' through in one go.

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 1:1-2:2

Jobes: "The truth about Jesus Christ begins with his being an actual person in human history who chose witnesses to explain the true significance of his life, death, and resurrection. This opening invites readers to join the fellowship of like-minded belief by following and remaining in the teaching about Christ given by those who have the authority to speak spiritual truth."

The Text

1. Read 1:1-4. What is being proclaimed? What is the authority behind that proclamation?

The proclamation is about the word of life

The writer claims eye-witness authority. He is probably referring both to the earthly life of Jesus and to his post resurrection appearances.

Morris: "From the beginning shows that the gospel is no afterthought. It was always in God's plan. John moves on to the factuality of it all, which is his main point. The gospel is concerned not with some mythical figure like the shadowy forms in the Greek mysteries, but with a genuine historical person. He had been heard and seen and touched (cf. Lk. 24:39; Jn. 20:20, 24-27)."

Note also the introduction of the idea of fellowship (v3)

Morris: "These verses, one highly compressed and complicated sentence in the Greek, form a prologue to the whole. John outlines some of the ideas he will develop as the letter unfolds."

Jobes: "The point of 1 John 1:1-4 is that Jesus really was with us, that the eternally preexistent Son of God was here! God knows firsthand the joys and sorrows, the trials and temptations, the hopes and fears of being human. The gospel message of the apostles originated in their encounter with the God-man."

2. Read 1:5-7. What is the content of the message? Who is the content of the message?

God is light – no darkness.

Morris: "The content of the message is summed up in the words God is light (cf. Jn. 8:12; 9:5) to which is attached (in a manner reminiscent of the fourth gospel where the positive and the negative are often linked like this) in him there is no darkness at all (cf. Ps. 27:1; Jn. 1:4-9)."

Jesus is ultimately the content (implied here) as the letter goes on to show. In

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v7 He is the antidote to the darkness.

God is light and we see his full brilliance in Jesus.

Campbell: *“Throughout the Old Testament there is a rich series of connections between God and light.”* He lists Gen 3:1; Ps 36:9; 43:3; 89:15; 104:2; Hab 3:4; Is 60:1, 19-20.

Note also John’s Gospel: 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19, 20, 21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; 12:35, 36, 46

3. Read 1:8-10. What does this tell us about sin, its reality, and its resolution?

Sin is all around – to deny it is to deny the truth and to offend God, It has been talked about in the paragraph before this as ‘walking in the darkness’. Its resolution is found through confession to the one who can forgive.

Morris: *“In contrast we may confess our sins. The plural is significant: we confess specific sins, not simply that we sin. And because God is faithful and just (cf. Dt. 32:4; Mi. 7:18-20; Rom. 3:25) he forgives. He can be thoroughly relied upon.”*

Campbell: *“Should we ever be tempted to think that some sins are beyond the reach of God’s mercy, we would do well to remember that he is not a capricious god, sitting in heaven weighing up which sins to forgive and which to punish. No God is faithful and just. His promise is sure and can be trusted: the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.”*

Jackman: *“God’s light is like that. It shines in the Scriptures and we see how far short of God’s standards we fall, how far we have strayed from the pathway, how frequently we have transgressed his commandments. It shines supremely in Jesus, the light of the world, whose perfect life shows us our own shabby, grubby lives by comparison. Walking in the light is not always a comfortable experience. As we walk in it, we become more conscious of our sin, not less.”*

Jobes: *“In a culture such as ours that values independent thinking and autonomy, it is often difficult for people to acknowledge the most basic principle of Theology 101: God is God and I am not.”*

4. Read 2:1-2. What does it say about sin and how Jesus has dealt with it?

He writes so that his readers might avoid sinning but affirms that there is forgiveness through Jesus.

Jesus is our Advocate.

Morris: *“When we sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence (Gk. paraklētos). The term has a legal ring; it often means the counsel for the defence; it is the friend at court. ‘The image is that of the royal court at which a suppliant needs someone greater than himself, one who has the ear of the king, to plead his cause’”*

He is also our propitiation or ‘atoning sacrifice’ – We will deal with the meaning of this word here, briefly, and again when it appears again in 4:10.

Morris: *“... the word (Gk. hilasmos) means the removal of wrath (cf. the NIV*

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mg.). There is a divine wrath against all sin (cf. Rom. 1:18) and forgiveness does not mean ignoring this. Propitiation, the turning away of anger, is not the whole story of Christ's saving work, but it is a genuine and important part of it, a truth which much modern theology overlooks. And Christ made ample provision; his propitiation avails for the sins of the whole world."

Campbell: "John's theology of the atonement makes a vital contribution to the New Testament teaching on the forgiveness of sins. Jesus is presented as the atoning sacrifice for sin (using the rare New Testament word propitiation in 2:2 and 4:10), taking our penalty for sin by diverting God's righteous wrath toward himself. He also takes away our sins, purifying us from all sin by his blood (expiation); he has also destroyed the devil's work. So John's conception of the atonement includes the complementary Christus Victor image alongside propitiation and expiation."

Jobes: "In 1 John 2:1-2, Jesus is called both our paraclete and our hilasmos. ... If a Christian sins, his or her otherwise good works cannot function as the paraclete before the Father (πρὸς τὸν πατέρα). Only Jesus Christ, who died to atone for sin and who lives to intercede and mediate our petition for forgiveness, can fill that role."

Connections

1. Read John 1:1-14 and note Genesis 1:1. What similarities do you see?

There are obvious verbal parallels with the prologue to John's Gospel. Which strengthens the case for it being the same author (which I have assumed throughout) and it at least implies Jesus pre-existence as John 1 does. Using 'in the beginning' automatically brings to mind the Creation account in Genesis 1 and thence God's eternal purposes.

2. Why is the importance of the claim in v1 to have heard, seen, looked at, touched?

This writer (John the Apostle) claims authority as an eye-witness and participant in the facts of Jesus.

He is not making this up.

Look at Luke 24:44-49; John 15:27, 19-25; 21:24; Acts 2:32; 4:20.

This is important for us as we think about how we witness to non-Christians. Jobes: *"This idea of a perception that goes beyond physically seeing is similar to the use of the term "sign" (σημεῖον) in John's gospel to refer not just to a miracle Jesus performed, but also to the significance of that miracle."*

Jobes: *"These letters insist that this apostolic testimony trumps any reinterpretation of Jesus by those who were not commissioned by him and who were far removed from personal knowledge of him."*

3. What do you learn about Jesus from what is said and implied this passage?

Pre-existent, seen and touched, Word of Life, with the Father, appeared to us, we have fellowship with Him, his blood purifies from Sin, He is the one who

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‘speaks to the father in our defense’.

4. What possible errors about Jesus and God are being challenged here?

That it is all made up

That Jesus is not God

That sin, one way or another, does not matter.

Dever: *“Interestingly, Paul had warned the elders of the church in Ephesus decades earlier that false teachers would come”* see Acts 20:29-30 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (Timothy was a young leader in the Ephesian Church).

Impact

1. From this passage who do you think John sees as the audience for his letter?

John here is addressing Christians he knows well.

He is speaking to them so that they may not be led astray.

Note 5:13

Dever: *“The real danger is not unbelief, but wrong belief; no irreligion, but heresy; not the doubter, but the deceiver.”*

2. How do you feel about confessing your sins? Corporately? Personally?

For discussion

Campbell: *“While we may be comforted by God’s forgiveness, we should not become complacent about the need for it. After all, our forgiveness came at great cost – no less than the blood of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. If we forget the seriousness of sin, we will inevitably cheapen the price he paid for us on the cross.”*

Something to think about: Campbell speaking of corporate confession:

“Churches can undermine the role of confession ... With the widespread decline of liturgical practice in today’s churches, corporate confession no longer features as it once did. After all, confession of sin is an essential element of the Christian life – as is hearing God’s word and offering him praise. Should not that reality be reflected in our meeting together?”

Jackman: *“As verse 9 teaches us, a true confession of sin asks for and anticipates forgiveness. This is not on the grounds of the intensity of our repentance, but on the grounds of what Christ did when he died for our sins on the cross. But if this is how we are to approach God, can we imagine that simply apologizing can rebuild fellowship with another Christian? Forgiveness must be asked for, given and received, for fellowship in the light to be totally restored.”*

It is said that this letter suggests three ‘tests’ of genuine Christianity.

A Doctrinal Test: What should we believe? A Social Test: How should we relate? A Moral Test: What should we do?

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?:

It is not my intention to answer these in every study – the table is basically here to help organize thought.

Belief	Love	Obedience
Jesus is the pre-existent Word	Fellowship	Do not sin

Study 2: 1 JOHN 2:3-14

Walking in God's Light – 2: “Walk as Jesus did.”

Before You Start

Discuss the relationship between faith and works.

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 2:3-14

The Text

- 1. Read 2:3-6. What new element of Christian life does this introduce? What does this aspect demonstrate?**

Obedience or doing what God commands.

It is not entirely new. In the letter it has been implied in the language of walking in the darkness or the light in 1:6

Throughout the letter obedience is the evidence and outworking of faith and relationship with God.

Morris: “*The knowledge of God is not some mystic vision or intellectual insight; it is manifested when we obey his commandments. Obedience is not spectacular, but it is at the basis of all true Christian service.*”

Jackman: “*Grace does not abolish God’s law; it internalizes it, by writing it on our hearts. That is why 1 John 2:4 reinforces the preceding verse, by denying its opposite. The disobedient person who professes to be a Christian is a liar (Greek, pseustēs)*”

- 2. Read 2:7-8. What ‘command’ does this immediately make you think of? In what sense is it ‘old’?**

Discuss.

The following paragraph (v9-11) will enlighten you.

Note Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 and also, of course John 13:34-35 (and Matthew 22:37-40).

Morris: “*The command was first fulfilled by Christ (its truth is seen in him), who puts a like love into the hearts of his followers (and you). Thus, our attitude to other people shows whether we are in the darkness that is passing away or in the true light that is already shining. To live in love is to walk in the light, to walk surefootedly, for love rids the heart of all that would make us stumble. Love and light go together.*”

Campbell: “*The new command, love, is seen in Jesus and in his people. Jesus’s love and the love of his disciples, is the light shining in the darkness of the world in rebellion against God. This has direct implications for John’s readers and 2:9-11 will make clear.*”

- 3. Read 2:9-11. What is the result of love and the result of hate?**

Love = living (walking) in the light – not stumbling.

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Hate = walks in darkness – does not know where he is going – blinded
Gabbott: *“Sin, lovelessness and error are as incompatible with the true Christian as darkness is incompatible with light.”*

4. Read 2:12-14. In this poem what groups of people are addressed? Why?

Dear Children

Because – sins forgiven, known the father

Fathers

Because – known him from the beginning (x2)

Young Men

Because – overcome the evil one (x2), strong, word of God lives in them.

It is probable/possible that each of these terms refers to all Christians and John is being ‘poetic’ here.

Morris: *“It may be argued that knowledge accords with fathers (those old in the faith), and strength with young men. But as all the qualities ought to be found in all believers it is best to regard the division as a stylistic device, adding emphasis. ‘All Christians are (by grace, not nature) children in innocence and dependence on the heavenly Father, young men in strength, and fathers in experience’ (C. H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles [Hodder, 1946], pp. 38-39). John’s readers have the forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of God, the word of God abiding in them, and victory over the evil one.”*

Connections

1. What is the force of the word ‘walk’ in v6?

The Greek word is ‘peripateo’ (which is almost onomatopoeic) which is literally to physically walk. It is often translated in the New Testament as ‘live’ which is consistent and right but loses the ‘picture’ aspect of the word. I take it that the idea is that what is on view is the ongoing progress of our life, it is not static, it is headed somewhere.

2. What obedience is required?

Obedience to the commands of God.

Note that this is evidence that we belong to God

3. What does it mean to ‘love’ your brother (and sister)?

Discuss first.

Love (agape) in the New Testament is about doing good for others. It is an action not a feeling.

Jobes: *“John teaches here that the one who is in the light and loves others does not present them with any enticement that would lead them away from the will of God. What a vast and all-encompassing view of love! Love is not an emotion, nor is it a sentimental abstraction. It is living with others as God intends us to. What a convicting message in a society where so many feel entitled to live for themselves alone and believe that how they live is no one’s business but their own. Modern society seems to have lost the ideal of living*

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for the common good (cf. 1 Cor 10:24) and has [1–3 Jn, p. 99] replaced it with a self-centered philosophy of looking out for number one. To live a Christ-centered life that strives to do right by others is increasingly countercultural. How much thought do we give to how our example, our words, and our behavior influence those around us, particularly other Christians?"

4. How do v12-13 help us identify the people who are addressed in the whole of the 'letter'?

First we observe that they are precious to John as he uses terms of endearment

They matter to him.

It would seem that all of 'children', 'fathers', and 'young men' are Christians of varying degrees of maturity.

Impact

1. How is your obedience going?

For discussion

Dever: *"It's very simple. If you are a child of God, you will live like God. If you are a child of the devil, you will live like the devil. That's all there is to it. No now Christian perfectly lives like God. And, thankfully, no non-Christian lives exactly like the devil. So don't misunderstand what I am saying – Christians will make mistakes and sin. John follows his remarks by ...by saying "But if any one does sin, we have one who speaks to father in our defense – Jesus Christ the righteous one" (2:1)"*

2. How is your 'love' going?

Campbell: *"Choosing to love may hurt and it may humble us. It may require us to ask for forgiveness and let go of injustices. But God's love will overcome our stubborn hearts if we let it. And it will lead other to the God who is love.."*

For discussion

Campbell speaks of Scott McKnight ([A Fellowship of Differents](#) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2014) p53-59) defining love as 'rugged commitment with and for another person unto Christlikeness': *"Love is 'rugged commitment' because it is often hard work. It is 'with' because love is about sharing presence together. It is 'for' because love means you will be their advocate, on their side. It is 'unto' because love is directional; it moves toward the one to whom we surrender our love. These 'love prepositions' give shape to our understand of what love is as revealed by God's love in Christ."*

Jackman: *"What Robert S. Candlish said over a century ago remains true: 'A selfish religionist is sure to become either morbid or stupid. It is by sympathy and brotherhood that the fire of personal Christianity is fanned.'" The absence of that positive active love for others can be as sure an indication of walking around in the darkness as the more outward forms of hatred and violence."*

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Study 3: 1 JOHN 2:15-27

Practising God's Truth–1: "Do not love the world"

Before You Start

What are the characteristics, both good and bad, of the world around us?

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 2:15-27

The Text

1. Read 2:15-17. What should we not love? Why?

We should not love the 'world'.

Note Matthew 6:24

The 'world' leads us away from the father and does not remain – it passes away.

Jobes: "To be "of" God or "of" the world specifies the origin of one's impulses, motivations, and spiritual identity. ... When John writes, "Because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride of life—is not of [ek] the Father but is of [ek] the world" (2:16), he means that these things characterize the person who is of the world."

2. Read 2:18-19. What time is it? What should we be beware of in this time?

It is the 'last hour'.

Morris: "There is no article with hour. John is saying 'this is last hour', by which he probably means 'this is a last hour'. Human history proceeds by periods of slow unfolding until a crisis is reached, an age is ended, a new age begins, and we say, 'It can never be the same again.' John is affirming that such a last hour has come."

Campbell: "The biblical phrase 'last days' can be seen as parallel to John's 'last hour.' The 'last days' language from Acts, 2 Timothy, Hebrews, and James and 2 Peter refers to a current reality. This is especially clear in Hebrews 1:2: "But in these last days [God] has spoken to us by his son.' The 'last days' refers to the current era of salvation history, between Jesus ascension and his return (see Isa 2:2, Hos 3:5, and Mic 4:1 for the Old Testament background of the term."

We should beware of Anti-Christ's - those who stand against Jesus

See question in regards to 'antichrist' below.

3. Read 2:20-23. Who has the truth, and what is it? What is the great lie?

John's readers do have the truth.

It comes by the 'anointing' (that is of the Holy Spirit at conversion)

The key truth is summarized in v23.

The lie – is the false view of Jesus that John's opponents XXX present.

Morris: "The lie. 22 They denied that Jesus is the Christ and this is fundamental. The person who goes wrong here is not to be depended on anywhere; that person is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. The evidence that in Jesus of Nazareth God and humanity are indissolubly united is

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so strong that anyone who will not accept it is fundamentally astray and is guilty of the radical lie. 23 Without a right view of the Son we cannot have a right view of the Father. If Jesus is not the very Son of God and one with the Father, then it is not the love of God that we see revealed in his life and death; in that case it would be only the love of a good man that is seen."

Note Morris: *"The illumination given by the Spirit means that in Christianity there is no enlightened elite on whom all others depend. Every believer has knowledge."*

4. Read 2:24-27. What do we need to 'remain'?

Believe what was heard from the beginning

The Son

The anointing

Morris: *"If John's readers let that remain (the Gk. verb occurs twenty-four times in this letter) in them then they will remain in the Son and in the Father."*

Campbell: *"In fact all relationships require nurturing. Even formal relationships, like marriage and family, must be nurtured to enhance their quality and to ward off atrophy. Just as we might encourage a married couple to invest in their relationship, so believers ought to invest in their relationship with Christ. As the Spirit teaches us let us remain in him."*

Connections

1. What is the 'world'? What danger does it present?

The Greek word used here is 'cosmos'

O'Donnell: *"Therefore, 'the world' in this passage does not mean the world in general; rather, it means the world that has abandoned its Creator and lives apart from his rule. It is the godless world that is totally 'at variance with God' and his will.⁵ It is the Babylon described in Revelation, 'the sensual, materialistic pagan society that Christianity had to overcome.'⁶ It is a group of people who are part of a system that is 'organized on wrong principles, and characterized by base desires, false values, and egotism.'⁷ Quite simply, 'the world' means 'worldliness,' and quite sadly, it means 'the typical kind of life that is being lived by the average person today.'"*

Morris on v15: *"John emphasizes world by using the word three times in this verse and another three times in the two succeeding verses. It is an important concept (in this letter he uses the term twenty-three times). Do not love the world, he says, and some see a contradiction here with 'God so loved the world' (Jn. 3:16). But that passage speaks of God's love for all people, whereas this one is concerned with setting one's heart on worldliness. John makes two points: first, love for the world in this sense is incompatible with love for the Father (cf. Jas. 4:4), and secondly, in any case the world and all that is in it are temporary."*

2. What promises are there in this passage for the Christian who 'remains'?

Life forever v17

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Anointing v20

Knowing the truth v21

Eternal life v25

3. What is meant by 'antichrist'?

Jobes: "Many people who have heard the term "antichrist" (ἀντίχριστος) are probably surprised to learn that this term occurs in the NT only in John's letters (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). The antichrist in popular religious culture has strong connections with the book of Revelation, based on identifying the apocalyptic image of the beast with the antichrist, who is often portrayed by modern preachers as a future world ruler who will set himself against Christ and his people in hostile and violent acts and is associated with the number 666.

But John, the only biblical writer to use the term, defines it quite differently. First, there are "many" (πολλοί) antichrists. Second, they are not in the future but have been among, and may have emerged out of, the very community(-ities) to whom John writes, even two thousand years ago. ... Finally, John defines what he means by an antichrist as (1) "the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah]" (2:22); (2) "every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus [come in flesh]" (4:3); and (3) any "who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh" (2 John 7)."

Jackman: "There are at least two predominant ideas in the use of this term antichristos. The first is of a rival to Christ, who claims to possess all the power and ability of Christ. The second is of opposition to Christ, deliberately standing over against Jesus and his righteousness and truth. The antichrist is thus a usurper, who, under false pretences, assumes a position to which he has no right, and who resolutely opposes the rightful owner of that position, Christ. This deception must be detected and opposed in both our belief and our behaviour."

Morris: "He sees evidence in the appearance not simply of the antichrist, but of many antichrists. The early church clearly expected that a mighty figure of evil, the antichrist, would appear at the end of time (cf. 'the man of lawlessness', 2 Thes. 2:3). John uses the term four times (and once in 2 John) but he is not interested in the future evil individual. His concern is for his readers, and he stresses for them the fact that the spirit of antichrist is already abroad. The situation is the same today."

4. Look at John 15:1-8. What does Jesus say about remaining or abiding?

The 'vine and branches' implies both the intimacy and source of the abiding or remaining.

Key and source is Jesus.

Right belief in Jesus is abiding in Him and abiding in Him means truly obeying his commands and truly loving those around.

Impact

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- 1. In this chapter John gives three tests of the man or woman who knows God (see John 17:3). The test of obedience (v3-6), the test of love (v7-11) and the test of belief (v18-27). In what way do these tests help us to be sure that we have eternal life?**

For discussion

You might like to do this by filling out the table below.

- 2. What in the world tempts you to 'love' it?**

For discussion

- 3. What can you do this week to work on 'remaining in him'?**

Discuss.

Read Bible, Pray, meditate on the Son.

Jackman *"If you have God's Word in your hand and God's Spirit in your heart you have everything you need to understand truth and grow in Christ."*

Study 4: 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

Practising God's Truth – 2: "He who does what is right is righteous"

Before You Start

Campbell: *"Two interlocking themes are threaded through this passage. The first is about being the children of God; the second is about acting rightly as God's children."*

Ideally what should the Parent/Child relationship look like?

For discussion

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

The Text

- 1. Read 2:28-29. What is the result of continuing in him?**

Being born of Jesus – the 'him' in these verses.

Standing confident and unashamed (no sin) before him in the judgement (his coming).

Gabbott: *"This is the first time in the letter that John describes Christians as 'born of him'. Read John 1:12-13; 3:3; Romans 8:14-17; 1 Peter 1:23. What additional information about this new birth can we gather from these passages?"*

Jackman: *"Adoption is a legal action by which a person takes into his family a child who is not his own, who has no rights within that family, in order to give that child all the privileges of his own children. In Roman law, as in ours, an adopted child was entitled to all the rights and privileges of a natural-born child."*

- 2. Read 3:1-3. What is the great privilege of the Christian? What is the final result of this?**

Morris on the opening of v1: *"The wonder of it all grips John. 'Look!' he says (the NIV paraphrases with How great), 'Look at what love the Father has given*

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us, that we should be called the children of God!”

Being called ‘children of God’ – pause and reflect on this for a moment.

Campbell: *“We are not only called children of God: ‘that is what we are!’(3:1b) God’s love does not simply effect a name change. Believers really are his children. Our status has changed. ... The childhood is real, just as his fatherhood is real.”*

The result, finally, is being truly, completely like him on that glorious day when he returns to set all things right.

3. Read 3:4-6. What do these verses say about sin, sinning and Jesus?

Sin is law breaking (lawlessness),

Sinning is not to be part of the believers life – continuous, habitual sinning that is.

To keep on sinning is to deny true knowledge of Jesus
Jesus is sinless and appeared, to take away our sins.

Morris: *“The false teachers seem to have held that knowledge was all-important and that conduct was a minor matter. But John insists that sin is evidence of wrong relationship to God. Sin, he says, is lawlessness, where the Greek construction implies that the two words are interchangeable.”*

4. Read 3:7-10 What are these verses encouraging?

Doing right – being righteous.

Ditching the devil.

Acting like God’s child.

Connections

1. Consider the relationship between God and his children. What is the basis for it? How is it lived? How is it expressed?

First consider again the great privilege it is to be called Children of God – Jesus is our Brother – we are adopted into God’s family.

Its basis is Jesus’ appearance to take away our sins (v5,8)

In terms of the rest of this letter it is belief that Jesus is the Son of God come to earth to pay the penalty for our sin.

It is lived in obedience (2:29; 3:6,7,9,10)

It is expressed in love (3:10)

Morris: *“John appeals to family relationship with ‘little children’ (Gk. teknia) and urges his readers to behave in the way that is appropriate at Christ’s second coming and which shows that they have been born [better, ‘begotten’] of him. Believers are not simply people who are trying to live a little better. They have been radically renewed, born all over again. The habitual practice of goodness is evidence of what God has done in them.”*

2. Compare 1:8-10 with 3:6(9). How do we resolve this apparent “contradiction”?

The important thing to remember is the distinction between ongoing sinfulness and committing individual sins.

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We ought not to be involved in either but our very nature makes individual sins common (just reflect on your last 24 hours) but as we confess these we know that on the basis of the death of Jesus we can be forgiven.

Morris: *“John has already repudiated the doctrine of sinless perfection (1:8, 10) and we must not interpret these words in such a way as to contradict those. But we must see that sin and the Christian are radically opposed. ‘John is arguing rather the incongruity than the impossibility of sin in the Christian’ (J. R. W. Stott, The Letters of John, TNTC [IVP, 1988], p.131)”*

Continual, habitual sin is quite different – it must be purged from our lives. We cannot do this by ourselves we need Jesus’ work in us and the Holy Spirit’s indwelling to do it.

Morris: *“This has effects in the Christian for no-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. We must not water down statements like this; the Christian has no business with sin and must never be complacent about it, even about occasional sin. But we should also notice that the present tense in Greek often has a continuous force and this appears to be its significance here: ‘no-one who continually lives in him makes a habit of sinning’ and again, no-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. John is not writing about individual acts of sin, but about habitual attitudes. The life we live reveals the source from which we draw our life.”*

3. What references to the future return of Jesus can you see in this passage? What is the significance of this?

Note 2:28; 3:2

Part of assurance of believing in Jesus is that we have a hope – that hope is the promised return of Jesus

Jackman: *“What we do know is that he is coming, that we are going to see him as he truly is; and in that moment, by the same grace that has made us his children, we shall be made like him. At that moment the process which began when first we trusted Christ will come to its fulfilment, and the image of God in his children will be fully restored.”*

4. From v10 what tools are we given to discern true and false believers?

We look at their actions and their love for their brothers and sisters.

Note the strong language.

We need to heed this warning ourselves before we start applying it to others.

Impact

1. Do you continue in sin? Are there sinful practices you hold on to in secret? What should you do about this?

Jackman: *“What is true for something outwardly visible, like a fiery temper, is equally true for those more common but hidden sins of criticism, jealousy, bitterness, greed, and impurity, which dog so many of our lives. If we are unconcerned about them, excusing them as our little weaknesses or peccadilloes, we can only be grieving and quenching the Spirit.² We are*

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denying our new birth. No real Christian can rest content with that state of affairs. We cannot be happy to go on sinning"

Discuss.

Augustine said: *"How can we avoid sin? By keeping the commandment of Christ. And what is that commandment? It is that we should love. Love, and sin is undone"*

Notice that in v8b Jesus has come 'to destroy the devils work'. So what power does this give us in our battle to resist temptation to sin?

John Newton (the English slave trader turned Pastor and writer of the hymn 'Amazing Grace') once prayed with his family: *"I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I wish to be. I am not what I hope to be. Yet I can truly say, I am not what I once was. By the grace of God I am what I am."*

2. How can you express your calling as a child of God this week?

Discuss

Jackman: *"Jesus 'went around doing good ... because God was with him' (Acts 10:38). What was true of the Lord Jesus, that he demonstrated his righteous nature in a life of righteous behaviour, is to be true of his genuine disciples too."*

Campbell: *"When we know God as Father, we have confidence in his presence. We have access to him. We know that he accepts us and cherishes us. We know that we have nothing to fear from him. He hears our prayers as we address him as "our Father in heaven.""*

Study 5: 1 JOHN 3:11-24

Living in God's Love – 1: "let us ... love ... with actions and in truth."

Campbell: *"Love is a major theme of 1 John. God is love. Love comes from God. Love is seen in Jesus's death for us. To know God is to love him. To love God is to love others. Without love, we cannot know God. Love is central. Love is what we need. It is impossible to walk away from 1 John without being struck by the awesome love of God in Christ. We also cannot walk away without being deeply challenged to love one another in sacrificial, costly, practical ways."*

Before You Start

What are loving actions?

For discussion

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 3:11-24

The Text

1. Read 3:11-15. What is the command? What example are we given?

The command is 'love one another'

Note these other references: John 15:12; 13:34-35; Romans 12:10; Romans 13:8; Hebrews 10:24, 1 Peter 3:8; 2 John 1:5

The example is a negative one about Cain.

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Morris: *“Look at what the lack of love does: Cain, who belonged to the evil one... murdered his brother, the logical consequence of his refusal to love (cf. Mt. 5:21-22). John’s answer to the question why did he murder him? is a penetrating critique of fallen human nature. It was no offence of Abel’s but his righteous life in the face of Cain’s bad life. (This is the last use of the ‘righteousness’ words in the letter; from this point the ‘love’ words abound.) Evil people do not love the highest when they see it. It accuses them and they crucify it.”*

Note Galatians 5:6

2. What do 3:12-15 say about hate? What does the contrast with Cain teach us?

Its out there – even among God’s people.

Expect ‘the world’ to hate Christians.

But note Campbell: *“Christians can provoke hatred by being unnecessary judgmental, harsh, and mean-spirited. This is not what Jesus had in mind when he said the world would hate his followers. Such behavior brings disrepute to Jesus rather than honor”* and *“Sadly, too many believers respond to hostility with hostility in turn. But hate mail does not lead people to repentance. And it does not honor Christ. Rather, gracious forgiveness, love, and mercy are what our world needs in the face of its opposition to Jesus.”* Worth thinking this through in the light of the Israel Folau controversy that is raging as I write.

Morris: *“Thus, John can go on: Do not be surprised [‘stop marvelling’ is the force of it], my brothers, if the world hates you. Christians usually find it difficult to understand this. When they act from the best of motives, with love in their hearts for their fellows, when they look for nothing for themselves, but offer the priceless gift of the gospel, the world does not respond with gratitude. It hates believers.”*

Jobes: *“The world hates righteousness, so it should be no surprise that it hates “you,” John says to those who are living out their faith in Christ. But Jesus also taught that the world cannot hate those who don’t live in him, “but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil” (John 7:7). Is 1 John 3:13 contradicting John 7:7? Not at all. The world would not hate the believer except when it sees Christ in him or her. To the extent that the believer agrees with Jesus’ testimony about evil and changes their life to do right, those who are of the world hate them for it (John 15:18–19; cf. 17:14).”*

Hate separates us from God.

3. Read 3:16-20. How are we to love?

Practically.

Simply reinforces the idea of love as a verb (doing) not merely a noun.

Morris: *“The person sees his brother for long enough to be sure of the situation. But he has no pity on him, more literally ‘shuts up his entrails from*

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him'. The Greeks held that this part of the body was the special location of the emotions so that the use of the term indicates that the person was emotionally involved."

Morris on v15: *"This is spelled out with an emphatic declaration about hate: Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer. Jesus said that the lustful look is adultery and that the angry word breaks the command 'Do not murder' (Mt. 5:21-22). John follows this example and goes to the deep roots of our actions. Hatred is of the essence of murder, and no murderer has eternal life in him ('to take life is to forfeit life', J. R. W. Stott, The Letters of John, TNTC [IVP, 1988], p. 146)"*

4. Read 3:21-24. How do we know we are Christians?

By the witness of our consciences and by knowing our own attempts to obey and love.

But remember in the end it all comes down to Jesus work not ours.

The key is believing in Jesus.

Connections

1. How is 'Love one another' a message we have 'heard from the beginning? What does this imply?

See again Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 and also, of course John 13:34-35 (and Matthew 22:37-40).

God does not start to be 'love', or be interested in his people loving one another when Jesus comes. God's purpose has always been to LOVE his people. This He must do justly and in the way that honours his name. But love for God Himself and for one another is basic to the Biblical revelation.

And note this from Jobes: *"Even though the specific circumstances of John's letter made him focus on Christian love for other believers, the letter is set within the larger context of Jesus' teaching about love for others. God brings people into the world with the intent that they will have what they need to sustain life—water, food, clothing, shelter. God's love for them is channeled through his children who are willing to share of their own more abundant resources. But does God feel the love of his children when wealthy churches are building luxurious new buildings and a child starves to death somewhere every four seconds?⁸ As Jesus said, from everyone to whom much is given, much is expected (Luke 12:48), for those to whom much is given are expected to be channels of God's love into the lives of others. The causes of poverty around the world are complex, and often the resources given are hijacked by evil and corrupt people before they reach their intended destinations. In spite of such things, the church needs to be ever vigilant about its own stewardship of resources, to prevent the tragedy that there be entire churches that are not "of God.""*

2. Note 3:17-18 and read James 1:27; 2:14-19. What do these verses say to us about the way we live our lives in relation to others?

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Walk the walk as well as talk the talk.

Jackman: *“One of the loveliest Christians it has ever been my privilege to meet was Dr Kenneth Moynagh, who was for many years a missionary doctor in Rwanda and whose life was filled with the fragrance of Christ. On the few occasions I met him, I sensed most powerfully the love of Christ in his servant. After his death, a poem of his was published. Taking the ninefold fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, he made a character study of the Lord Jesus Christ within the Christian. Nothing less than this is what God wants to produce in the life of every member of his family.*

*Joy is Love exulting and Peace is Love at rest;
Patience, Love enduring in every trial and test.
Gentleness, Love yielding to all that is not sin.
Goodness, Love in actions that flow from Christ within.
Faith is Love’s eyes opened the living Christ to see;
Meekness, Love not fighting, but bowed at Calvary.
Temperance, Love in harness and under Christ’s control,
For Christ is Love, in person—and Love, Christ in the soul.”*

3. Read Matthew 22:36-40. If Jesus is right what is John saying, or implying in 3v23?

Is not this an outright claim that Jesus IS God.

Campbell: *“It is possible that John implies that the right way to love God is to believe in his Son. Acceptance of and faith in Christ is the mark that someone truly knows and loves the God who is revealed in Christ. And just as loving God and loving neighbor go together, so believing in Jesus and loving one another must go together”*

4. What does this passage have to say to us about our prayers? (Note v19,20,21,22)

Basically these are saying that if we evidence (that is show) that we belong to Jesus and God then we have confidence to come before Him (even if we don’t feel worthy).

Morris: *“Receiving answers to prayer does not at first sight follow on from the fact that our heart does not condemn us. But confidence is common to both, and answered prayer inevitably increases our confidence. Both obey and do are in continuous tenses. Power in prayer does not come from occasional bursts of obedience, but from lives of habitual obedience. Further, believers do what pleases him. This goes beyond the keeping of the commandments. Just as in the Sermon on the Mount there is a concern for the spirit of the commandments; it is not enough to keep the letter of the law.”*

Impact

1. Love in action! Share some examples of where you have seen love in action.

For discussion

Gabbott: *“Not many of us will be called to lay down our lives for our brothers*

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and sisters. In what other ways can our responsibility to love find expression?" Campbell: "The other type of laying down one's life is also demanding. Giving things up for others is not a onetime action: it is a lifelong discipline. Showing concern for the needs of others is a daily struggle against selfishness. Sustaining an interest in the welfare of others is an ongoing expression of love. While we may experience loving moments – when we are good at putting the needs of others ahead of our own – it is another thing to live a loving life. A life lived in regular and consistent service to others is only possible through the indwelling of God's love (3:17)."

Jobes tells this story: "When I was a child, before coming to faith in Christ, there was a young girl at school who was the daughter of Christian missionary parents. Her clothes were clean but quite worn and far from the fashions of the day. She seemed different from other children in undefinable ways, and in ways that made her a target of the mean taunts of her classmates. After I became a Christian, I looked back on that school year with shame that I didn't befriend that poor, lonely child. I don't remember teasing her as some did, but I also didn't risk my own social standing in the class to stand beside her. I participated in the world's hate for that child of God, that daughter of missionary parents, who now could likely be a good friend. There is something in fallen human nature that wants to avoid people who believe in such a thing as God's truth and who attempt to live by it."

2. How do we come before God in confidence? (Remember chapter 1:8-9)

For discussion

Because of the forgiveness there is in Jesus.

Study 6: 1 JOHN 4:1-6

Practising God's Truth – 3: "test the spirits"

Before You Start

What 'false prophets' are there in our world and the church today?

All sorts.

If it feels good do it!

God wants to make you wealthy/ healthy/ prosperous/ powerful.

Mankind is its own saviour.

The world is progressing toward perfection.

This world is all we have.

Jesus was just a great teacher and healer

Etc. etc.

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 4:1-6

The Text

1. Read 4:1. What are we to test? Why?

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We are to test the spirits.
To see if they are truly from God
Spirits??

Jobes: "Within the context of the situation into which John writes, there were apparently professing Christians who were teaching false things by appealing to the authority of the Holy Spirit. By instructing to "test the spirits," John is saying more than "Do not believe every person who claims to have the Spirit." In the Johannine dualism, the human spirit is motivated and energized by impulses that come either from God's Spirit or from the diabolical spirit of deception (4:6d). In that sense, the demonic is involved here, but not in the sense that the "spirits" are individual demons possessing or influencing those who have gone out from the Johannine churches. John is concerned to instruct his readers to be aware of and discern between two opposing spiritual forces at work that can be manifested in human behavior apart from demonic possession. In the context of the Johannine churches, these two forces were being manifested by true and false confessions of faith in Christ."

2. Read 4:2-3. How do you recognize 'the Spirit of God? Why is this important?

The Spirit of God affirms (acknowledges) that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

Because entertaining the false spirits leads to Hell.

3. Read 4:4. What encouragement is there in this verse?

We are not fighting a losing battle.

We have overcome them – not in the future but now.

Why because God's Spirit is in us and He (the Triune God) is greater than any false spirit.

Campbell: "Hilary of Arles (ca. AD 401-49) comments 'God's power to save is always much greater than the devil's power to do harm.'"

4. Read 4:5-6. What contrast is drawn here?

The contrast is between those who are of the world and those who are from God.

Important to be on the right side – see 4:4

Connections

1. Here is that 'antichrist' again. What are we told about 'him'?

He is 'even now' in the world. He is to come

Note the comments on the antichrist in Study

Morris: "John's readers appear to have understood the antichrist's coming as future, but John sees it as a present reality; his even now, he is already, and he is in the world combine to emphasize the present."

2. There are clues in this passage as to the sorts of errors the 'false prophets' had been peddling around John's readers. What can you discern?

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The main error seems to be around who Jesus exactly is. As discussed elsewhere they denied the true full divinity and true full humanity of Christ.

3. Is John just being arrogant in 4:6? Why, and on what basis is he making this claim? (Remember 1:1-3)

Of course not!

He makes the claim on the basis that he is an eyewitness and he is communicating the truth.

Campbell: *"The test in this half of the passage, then, involves people's response to John's teaching, which represent the apostolic witness. If they 'listen to us' they are from God. If they do not listen, they are from the world."*

4. What information is given to us in this passage to help us discern the, to coin a phrase, fake spirits?

They will belittle or deny or modify the truth about Jesus.

Campbell: *"There is ... a simple test to recognize the Spirit of God: proper acknowledgment of who Jesus is and where he is from. Any spirit that fails this test is not from God but is the spirit of the antichrist."*

Impact

1. What 'false' beliefs have you been exposed to? What temptation do they provide?

For Discussion

Gabbott: *"What are the 'three black lies' of John's letter? Read 1 John 1:6 and 2:4. 1 John 2:22. 1 John 4:20.*

Campbell: *"Since we live in the world (but are not of the world), it is our constant temptation to interpret reality according to the norms attitudes, and values of the world. Instead, we must be reminded of God's truth – and of his values and intention for humanity."*

2. Discuss what you have learned of the nature of Jesus in 1 John so far?

Worth flicking back through the pages to be reminded.

Study 7: 1 JOHN 4:7-21
Living in God's Love - 2

“(Whoever loves God must) also love his brother and sister.”

Campbell: *"This long and complex passage is unified around the exhortation to love one another and is the third major section of the letter dedicated to that theme (see also 2:9-11; 3:11-18). The passage is bracketed by the first and last paragraphs both of which begin with the exhortation 'let us love' (4:7,19)."*

Morris: *"Love is very important for John and he puts emphasis on it throughout this letter. Here he does this by drawing attention to the fact that love is rooted in God, who is, in fact, love."*

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Jobes: *“John here identifies both the source and definition of love as God himself. God’s love is most supremely expressed in the sending of the Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sin so that we might live eternally through him.”*

Before You Start

‘God is Love’ is a statement that gets bandied around. What do you understand by it?

I notice that Lewis Hamilton the Formula One champion has this phrase tattooed on his neck.

It was used as a slogan to be rammed down conservative Christian’s throats during the gay marriage debate.

We need to understand it biblically.

Discuss.

Jobes: *“Poets write about it, singers sing about, greeting cards convey the sentiment of love. But our world is full of whacky, irresponsible, and even perverse definitions of love that are used to rationalize selfishness, manipulate others, and even give evil free rein in the name of love. Because of our sinful, fallen human nature, we have lost the ability to define, much less practice, love as we were created to do.”*

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 4:7-12

The Text

1. Read 4:7-12. What is the basic topic here? What does it require of us?

The topic is Love one Another.

What it requires is for us to do it.

2. Read 4:13-16a. What basic belief is addressed here (again)? Why does it need to be repeated?

The basic belief that has been at the forefront of the discussion in the letter is that Jesus is the Son of God sent into the world.

In this letter it is partly, mainly, repeated because the deity or the humanity of Jesus was being denied or distorted by the false teachers.

Note that John Stott says of 4:14: ‘Here is the essence of the Gospel’ Gabbott then asks: *“Is this a fair statement? Why or why not? Could our gospel message be too complicated.”*

3. Read 4:16b-18. What characteristics of love are addressed here?

Its origin is with God.

It is made complete by living in ‘love’.

It leads to God-likeness.

It overcomes fear.

Implied I think - It is something we are being perfected in.

4. Read 4:19-21. What challenge is here?

Putting Love into practice.

Not acting out of ‘hate.’

Also we are challenged to grow in our love for God.

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Connections

1. God is Love! Francis Schaeffer described Christian love as ‘the ultimate apologetic’. Discuss?

Campbell quoting Dodd: *“But to say ‘God is love’ implies that all His activity is loving activity. If he creates, He creates in love: if He rules, He rules in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature which is – to love.”*

Morris: *“The negative underlines the point: Whoever does not love does not know God. The reason for this is one of the greatest statements in the whole Bible: God is love. This means more than ‘God is loving’ or that God sometimes loves. It means that he loves, not because he finds objects worthy of his love, but because it is his nature to love. His love for us depends not on what we are, but on what he is. He loves us because he is that kind of God, because he is love.”*

Jackman: *“Dr. Francis Schaeffer rightly described such love as ‘the ultimate apologetic’, for the Lord himself said, ‘All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another’ (Jn. 13:35). Love is the hallmark, the family characteristic. People should be able to see Christ’s love in our fellowships. Isn’t that the meaning, at least in part, of John’s vision in the opening of the book of Revelation? He sees the risen Lord in all his splendor and glory ‘among the lampstands’ (Rev. 1:13); which we are later told represent the churches (Rev. 1:20)—in all likelihood the very churches to which this letter is addressed. The same message is being reinforced. Christ’s physical presence is no longer with us in this world, but if people want to see Jesus, they should be able to meet him in the churches. They should encounter his love in the love we Christians have for one another. And again that means not just mystical visions, or wonderful warming words, but practical down-to-earth actions, the modern equivalent of washing one another’s feet (Jn. 13:14–17).”*

2. What does ‘atoning sacrifice’ (some other versions use the word ‘propitiation’) mean?

The Greek word is ‘hilasmos’. (Also used in 2:2)

It includes the idea of assuaging God’s righteous wrath against sin.

Morris: *“We find it in that God loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice (better as the NIV mg. ‘the one who would turn aside his wrath’). To see what love means we must see ourselves as sinners, and thus as the objects of God’s wrath, and yet as those for whom Christ died. ‘So far from finding any kind of contrast between love and propitiation, the apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation’ (J. Denney, The Death of Christ [Hodder and Stoughton, 1905], p. 276). It is one of the NT’s resounding paradoxes that it is God’s love that averts God’s wrath from us, and indeed that it is precisely in this averting of wrath that we see what real love is.”*

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Jackman: *“The advantage of the older translation, ‘propitiation’, is that it includes the idea of turning away the wrath of God from the sinner to the substitute. This concept has been widely criticized as unworthy of the God of the Bible, and caricatured as reducing him to the level of a pagan deity who has to be bribed to be gracious. But such criticism disputes or rejects the fact that the Bible reveals a God whose attributes include wrath and justice, however unpleasant or inconvenient human beings may find that to be.”*

Jobes: *“The violent death of a man executed as a seditious criminal would be the last place one would expect to see a demonstration of love, but that is exactly where the NT locates it. Such love is not based on human motives or emotions, but finds its impetus in the merciful heart of the creator God, who would rather submit to earthly horrors himself than condemn his beloved human race to perish. The cross of Jesus Christ is God’s love extended across the chasm that stranded us on hell’s side, separated from God and trapped in our sin. There is no other bridge by which we can cross over from death into life (John 5:24). It is only being cleansed from our sin that allows us to be reconciled to God and relate rightly to one another. The word God uses to describe relating rightly to others is “love.””*

3. What does v15 mean by ‘acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God’? Is that all there is to it?

Behind this question is the idea that simply saying the words ‘I believe Jesus is the Son of God’ is enough to save you.

I suspect, in fact I am sure, that this is not what John means. For John the idea of believing in Jesus is bound up in the reality of obeying Jesus’ command and that means loving my brother or sister.

4. Who should we love? Why? How?

We should love our brothers and sisters.

In the first instance this means loving fellow believers, those around us. But we need to remember that in the discussion of loving our neighbor used the parable of the Good Samaritan (an oxymoron to the Jews of Jesus’ time) to show what truly loving a neighbor (brother or sister) looks like.

Why – because Jesus says it is a good idea. It is his command.

How – As John has already said ‘with actions and in truth’ 3:17-18.

Impact

1. Who is our brother or sister? Are they always lovable?

Discuss the definition of brother and sister again.

Does lovable matter? Is the question.

Dever: *“We need Christlike consideration for others. ... The most honest test of Christian love is whether we love those with whom we have disagreed or have difficulty. If we simply love those who agree with us, we have no evidence of a Christian love. Christian love looks like Christ’s love. Whom did Christ love and*

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lay down his life for? Sinners! People in rebellion against him. At the very point of our rebellion, he laid down his life for us. That is Christian love."

2. If 'perfect love drives out fear' why are we often so fearful of the future?

Because our love still needs perfecting.

Campbell: "It is better translated 'complete love' or 'mature love' which would show its connection to believers' love being made complete. Complete love casts out fear because love give assurance in the face of judgment (4:17), and 'fear has to do with punishment' (4:18b). Since believers will not face punishment at the judgment day, there is no place for fear."

Study 8: 1 JOHN 5:1-12 Sharing God's Victory - 1

"everyone born of God overcomes the world"

Before You Start

Believe! Obey! Love! What have you learned from 1 John so far?

Simply for reflection.

Might want to skim back through chapters 1-4

Morris: "The thought of love leads to that of relationship to God, and that in turn to victory. Love and faith are closely connected (cf. 4:16), and the believer overcomes the world"

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 5:1-12

Campbell: "It is in fact the most comprehensive summary of the teaching of 1 John that the letter offers. ... It reiterates the letter's teaching about belief that Jesus is the Christ and about being born of God, loving God and his children, keeping God's commands and overcoming the world. It also emphasizes God's testimony by the Spirit as to who Jesus is and the eternal life he has given us."

The Text

1. Read 5:1-2. How is this an encouragement to us in our Christian lives?

It speaks of the basis of our faith, the outworking of our faith, and of the action of our faith.

These answers here become a little repetitive as John drives home his central three concerns.

Morris: "John keeps insisting that love for God and love for other people are closely connected. Usually he speaks of love for God as shown in love for people, but here he reverses the process: we know that we love the children of God when we love God. Love for God and love for people go together and form a unity. John's practical turn of mind does not stop at the thought of love for God but goes on to include carrying out his commands. Real love is shown by a concern to do God's will."

2. Read 5:3-5. Who overcomes the world? By what power?

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All those born of God.

And that power is not in ourselves but in the triune God.

Campbell: *"In other words, the faith of believers is what overcomes the world, and it produces love, which distinguishes believers from the world. As overcomers, those born of God are able to love as the Father loves."*

Campbell: *"John's meaning is not about conquering anybody. It is rather about successfully living God's way rather than succumbing to the whims and priorities of a rebellious world.."*

Jackman: *"After all, this was what Jesus himself promised. 'In this world you will have trouble,' he told his disciples on the last night he was with them. 'But take heart! I have overcome the world' (Jn. 16:33). And all those who are united to him, in this faith, have also overcome." And "For, as Howard Marshall reminds us, 'It rests foursquare on the fact that Jesus Christ has defeated death, and anybody who can defeat death can defeat anything.'"*

3. Read 5:6-9. Who or what bears testimony to Jesus? What is the water and blood that testify?

Three testify concern Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is fairly straight forward. We are indwelt by him and he points us constantly to Jesus (ref ZZZ)

Jackman: *"When first we are born again we receive the Holy Spirit, the life of God within. This is the uniform New Testament teaching from the day of Pentecost onwards. On that day Peter affirmed, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call' (Acts 2:38–39)."*

Water and Blood are a bit more controversial.

Morris: *"That Jesus came by water surely refers to his baptism, and likewise blood to his death. At his baptism he heard the heavenly voice and he solemnly entered his life's work. Some heretics apparently held that the divine Christ came on Jesus when he was baptized, but left him before his death. John contests this with his emphasis on blood: not by water only, but by water and blood. It was (and is) this that is the heart of the gospel."*

4. Read 5:10-12. What is the testimony that is given?

"God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"

Morris: *"This is emphasized in a crisp couplet. Life and the Son go together. It is impossible to have the one without the other."*

Campbell: *"Speaking of loving God and keeping his commands. John now equates these two concepts: 'In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.'" (5:3a)."*

Campbell: *"John is fond of black-and-white dichotomies, and this is one of his starkest examples. The strength of the statement leaves no room for*

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confusion: life is found in the Son, and without the Son there is no true life.” And “it simply is not possible to reject the Son and have life in God, no matter how devout one’s worship may be. The exclusivism of the Son is central to authentic Christianity. Jesus himself taught, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6).

Connections

1. List under the three headings what this passage has to say about Belief, Obedience and Love?

You can use the grid below.

In some ways this penultimate passage is a summary.

2. In what way does this passage provide a summary and revision of what the rest of the letter has said?

In this passage, and its worth reading it through again with this idea in mind each of the three themes are wound in and out.

3. “His commands are not burdensome”. How does that work out in your experience? What makes it true?

I don’t know about you but I some times struggle to obey the commands completely.

Morris: *“When John adds his commands are not burdensome (cf. Mt. 11:30), the thought is not that it is quite easy to discharge our obligations to God. Rather the thought is that God’s commands are not an irksome burden. They may be difficult but they are a delight.”*

Jackman: *“To profess love for God but to fail to obey his commands is a nonsense. It shows that we are actually thinking that his commands are a bore, a chore, a heavy load (verse 3b). And what does that say in turn about our attitude to God himself?”*

4. What makes God out to be a liar?

Not believing in Jesus – to put it simplistically.

Jobes: *“But the rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a morally neutral act. John would not look favorably on the pluralistic, culturally centered view of religious belief that is so popular today, that one’s belief is what is true for you but has no claim on me. Precisely because the apostolic testimony about Jesus is God’s testimony, to hear it and not believe it entails making God a liar.”*

Impact

1. What is the testimony God has given? What do you do with it?

See v11

We must commit to it.

Jackman: *“Saving faith depends not just on a general warmth and positive feeling towards Christ, whatever some evangelistic presentations may imply. It depends on a doctrinal confession concerning the person of Christ, on which the whole of our experience of God actually depends. ... Any personal*

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relationship we may claim to have with God has to be rooted in his revealed truth if it is to be assessed as genuine and not just wishful thinking."

2. How can you work at Belief, Love and Obedience in the next week?

For discussion

Study 9: 1 JOHN 5:13-21

Sharing God's Victory – 2: "He who has the Son has life"

Campbell: "If the previous passage is the theological conclusion of the letter this passage is the pastoral conclusion. It consists of concluding affirmations. Mostly building on theological points already discussed, though there are also some new elements introduced at this late stage."

Before You Start

"Victorious Death, Victorious Resurrection, Victorious Mission" were the themes of our Easter Services. How do you understand Christ's victory in your life?

I am not sure that we think about Jesus as 'Victor' as we go about our everyday Christian lives, but he is, and that means that the things that daunt us and hinder us cannot in fact hurt us because Jesus has indeed 'overcome'.

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 5:13-21

The Text

1. Read 5:13. Why has John written his 'letter'?

So that we may know that in fact we have (now) eternal life.

A great reassurance.

2. Read 5:14-15. Here is the topic of prayer again. What assurances are we given about our prayers?

Essentially that they are heard.

Note that we need to be asking 'according to his will'.

Worth discussing what that 'His will' might be.

Campbell: "Prayer is the ultimate expression of our access to God. The fact that the Creator of the entire universe listens to our requests and petitions is truly remarkable."

Jackman: "Our praying is never on a surer foundation than when it is grounded in Scripture, for here God's will is revealed. As we pray Bible prayers, we know that God will hear and answer."

3. Read 5:16-17. What are we to do about a brother who is sinning? (Notice the proviso.)

Pray – remember also the bit about confessing at the end of chapter 1.

The 'sin that leads to death' is discussed below.

4. Read 5:18-20. What final re-assurances does John give his fellow believers?

From the passage – The believer:

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does not continue to sin;
is kept him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.
are children of God
is given understanding
is given the assurance that God is the true God
has eternal life.

What a great list.

Morris: ***“The believer’s knowledge.***

Now come three statements in succession introduced by we know.

The first is, anyone born of God does not continue to sin. Again it is the habitual attitude.

The second statement concerns the origin of believers; they are children of God. By contrast, the whole world is under the control of the evil one, lit. ‘lies in the evil one’. This is an unusual verb in such a connection and may point to the powerlessness of the world lying under Satan’s sway; perhaps, too, to its inertness, its refusal to assert itself against its master.

The third of the trilogy directs us to the incarnation: the Son of God has come. ... The Son has given us understanding. The Christian faith is not a hindrance to intellectual activity but a stimulus to right thinking.”

5. Read 5:21. What are we to keep ourselves from? Why conclude with this instruction?

We are to keep ourselves from idols.

This IS as strange way to conclude. John has not mentioned idols or pagan religions at all in the letter.

I take it that idols are anything we put before God in our lives.

Jobes: *“Rather than an awkward and abrupt ending, 5:21 summarizes the point of the entire letter and challenges readers, both ancient and modern, to decide which god they will worship—the God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ or a false god conjured from human imagination.”*

Morris: *“In view of the whole preceding discussion it is unlikely that we should understand idols in the sense of images used in worship. The term means ‘false gods’. John’s readers have been given many gifts by God, including ‘understanding’ (20). Let them then keep themselves from every false god.”*

Connections

1. From this ‘letter’ what does John want to make sure we believe?

First and foremost that Jesus is the Son of God. Fully God and Fully Man.
And that he came to pay the price for our sins.

2. What is all this about ‘a sin that leads to death’? Are not all sins forgiven through the death of Jesus?

This is a startling idea.

Note Jesus words in Luke 12:10 about sin against the Holy Spirit.

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Morris: *"We should regard sin that leads to death as a state rather than an act; in Scripture there is no one specific act people do which results in death, but there is a state of sin, of being in rebellion against God, which John elsewhere calls remaining in death (3:14). Jesus warned that anyone who blasphemes against the Spirit 'will not be forgiven' (Lk. 12:10), and it is this kind of thing that is in mind here. John adds that he is not saying that believers should pray about sin that leads to death (though he does not say explicitly that they should not pray about it). This does not mean that we should try to calculate when we may and when we may not pray for others. It is a stern warning that sin damns people."*

Jackman: *"The sin that leads to death does so because, by its very nature, it rejects the only means by which sin may be forgiven—the atoning death of the incarnate Son of God. This underlines the important truth that it is not that this sin is unpardonable, but that it remains unpardoned. We need to preserve this distinction because so much of the rest of the letter has carefully established it."*

Campbell: *"Given the thrust of the letter as a whole it seems that the only sin that could never be forgiven is a persistent lack of belief in the one who God has sent to die for our sins."*

3. Read John 20:31 and compare it to 5:13 here. What similarities and differences are there?

John gives us a purpose statement for both this 'letter; and the Gospel.

Morris: *"John's gospel was written so that its readers might believe and so have life (Jn. 20:31). By contrast this letter was written to readers who already believe in order to give them assurance, the certainty that they have eternal life. John brings this out as his letter draws to a close."*

Impact

1. What have you learned about Christian relationships from 1 John?

"Love one another"

2. What idols do you need to keep yourself from?

For discussion.

Dever: *"What (John) is saying is simple: keep yourselves from a false and distorted Jesus. And you know you have a false and distorted Jesus in one of three ways.*

First you might have the wrong doctrine.

You might conceive of Christ as an impersonal principle or a spiritual force. Alternatively, you might think he was just a great human teacher. No, God became incarnate. Keep yourselves from such imposter Christs. Those are just idols to suit your desires.

Second, you might think God is indifferent to sin.

No, God incarnate dies for our sins. He is deeply concerned for how we live! If you are worshipping a God who is indifferent to sin, you are not

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worshipping the true God; you are worshipping an idol of your own making.

Third, you might think God is unconcerned with love.

Get your doctrine right; don't do anything grossly immoral; go to church. That's enough, right? No the God incarnate died for our sins because of his love for us. He leads his children to love one another with the same love. If you miss this, you have missed the real God and are worshipping some idol.

"Dear Children, keep yourselves from idols."

If you keep yourself from those idols, you can know you have gotten hold of the real thing." (Formatting mine.)

To Conclude: Jackman "Nearly 2,000 years on, the need for John's teaching to be heard, received and applied is as great as ever it was. As our century draws to its close all sorts of ingenious distortions of historic, orthodox biblical Christianity abound. Leading academics and church dignitaries are unwilling to affirm without hesitation the incarnation of Christ, or his sacrificial atoning death, or his bodily resurrection. Biblical morality is under attack within the church, as well as outside it, in such matters as sexual behaviour or the sanctity of human life. Scriptural marker posts which have guided generations are systematically removed in the name of a new hermeneutic or modern scholarship. We need to be recalled to the things that matter most, in our generation, as much as John's readers did."