



# 1 JOHN

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

**Living in the Love of God**  
**Term 2 2019**





KIAMA ANGLICAN  
CHURCHES

# **Living in the Love of God**

Studies in 1 John

# 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

## Program

Week Ending		Topic	1 John	Page No
Sun 5 May	1	<b>Walking in God's Light - 1</b> "God is light"	<b>1:1-2:2</b>	6
Sun 12 May	2	<b>Walking in God's Light - 2</b> "Walk as Jesus did."	<b>2:3-14</b>	8
Sun 19 May	3	<b>Practising God's Truth - 1</b> "Do not love the world"	<b>2:15-27</b>	10
Sun 26 May	4	<b>Practising God's Truth - 2</b> "He who does what is right is righteous"	<b>2:28-3:10</b>	12
Sun 2 Jun	5	<b>Living in God's Love - 1</b> "let us ... love ... with actions and in truth."	<b>3:11-24</b>	14
Sun 9 Jun	6	<b>Practising God's Truth - 3</b> "test the spirits "	<b>4:1-6</b>	16
Sun 16 Jun	7	<b>Living in God's Love - 2</b> "also love his brother and sister."	<b>4:7-21</b>	18
Sun 23 Jun	8	<b>Sharing God's Victory - 1</b> "everyone born of God overcomes the world"	<b>5:1-12</b>	20
Sun 30 Jun	9	<b>Sharing God's Victory - 2</b> "He who has the Son has life"	<b>5:13-21</b>	22

## RESOURCES

Campbell, C.R. 1, 2 & 3 John (The Story of God Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2017).

Jackman, D. "The Message of John's Letters: *Living in the love of God*" (The Bible Speaks Today) (Nottingham, IVP, 1988)

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

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).

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

The outline of The Johannine Epistles on the Bible Project website.

<https://thebibleproject.com/all-videos/>

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# 1 JOHN

## 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 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, S.M. Know That You Have Life: Studies in 1 John (Parish Bible Studies) (Kiama, Christ Church Kiama, 1984) p1.*

## 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

##### The Text

1. Read 1:1-4. What is being proclaimed? What is the authority behind that proclamation?
2. Read 1:5-7. What is the content of the message? Who is the content of the message?
3. Read 1:8-10. What does this tell us about sin, its reality, and its resolution?
4. Read 2:1-2. What does it say about sin and how Jesus has dealt with it?

##### Connections

1. Read John 1:1-14 and note Genesis 1:1. What similarities do you see?
2. Why is the importance of the claim in v1 to have heard, seen, looked at, touched?
3. What do you learn about Jesus from what is said and implied this passage?
4. What possible errors about Jesus and God are being challenged here?

##### Impact

1. From this passage who do you think John sees as the audience for his letter?
2. How do you feel about confessing your sins? Corporately?  
Personally?

*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?**

Belief	Love	Obedience

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## 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?
2. Read 2:7-8. What 'command' does this immediately make you think of? In what sense is it 'old'?
3. Read 2:9-11. What is the result of love and the result of hate?
4. Read 2:12-14. In this poem what groups of people are addressed? Why?

### Connections

1. What is the force of the word 'walk' in v6?
2. What obedience is required?
3. What does it mean to 'love' your brother (and sister)?
4. How do v12-13 help us identify the people who are addressed in the whole of the 'letter'?

### Impact

1. How is your obedience going?
2. How is your 'love' going?

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
Belief	Love	Obedience



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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?
2. Read 2:18-19. What time is it? What should we be beware of in this time?
3. Read 2:20-23. Who has the truth, and what is it? What is the great lie?
4. Read 2:24-27. What do we need to 'remain'?

#### Connections

1. What is the 'world'? What danger does it present?
2. What promises are there in this passage for the Christian who 'remains'?
3. What is meant by 'antichrist'?
4. Look at John XXX. What does Jesus say about remaining or abiding?

#### Impact

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?
2. What in the world tempts you to 'love' it?
3. What can you do this week to work on 'remaining in him'?

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
Belief	Love	Obedience

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

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

### Before You Start

**Ideally what should the Parent/Child relationship look like?**

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

### The Text

- 1. Read 2:28-29. What is the result of continuing in him?**
- 2. Read 3:1-3. What is the great privilege of the Christian? What is the final result of this?**
- 3. Read 3:4-6. What do these verses say about sin, sinning and Jesus?**
- 4. Read 3:7-10 What are these verses encouraging?**

### Connections

- 1. Consider the relationship between God and his children. What is the basis for it? How is it lived? How is it expressed?**
- 2. Compare 1:8-10 with 3:6(9). How do we resolve this apparent "contradiction"?**
- 3. What references to the future return of Jesus can you see in this passage? What is the significance of this?**
- 4. From v10 what tools are we given to discern true and false believers?**

### Impact

- 1. Do you continue in sin? Are there sinful practices you hold on to in secret? What should you do about this?**
- 2. How can you express your calling as a child of God this week?**

<b>What do you learn about each of these in this passage?</b>		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
<b>Belief</b>	<b>Love</b>	<b>Obedience</b>

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## Study 5: 1 JOHN 3:11-24

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

### Before You Start

What are loving actions?

Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 3:11-24

### The Text

1. Read 3:11-15. What is the command? What example are we given?
2. What do 3:12-15 say about hate? What does the contrast with Cain teach us?
3. Read 3:16-20. How are we to love?
4. Read 3:21-24. How do we know we are Christians?

### Connections

1. How is 'Love one another' a message we have 'heard from the beginning? What does this imply?
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?
3. Read Matthew 22:36-40. If Jesus is right what is John saying, or implying in 3v23?
4. What does this passage have to say to us about our prayers? (Note v19,20,21,22)

### Impact

1. Love in action! Share some examples of where you have seen love in action.
2. How do we come before God in confidence? (Remember chapter 1:8-9)

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
Belief	Love	Obedience

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## 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?

#### Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 4:1-6

##### The Text

1. Read 4:1. What are we to test? Why?
2. Read 4:2-3. How do you recognize ‘the Spirit of God? Why is this important?
3. Read 4:4. What encouragement is there in this verse?
4. Read 4:5-6. What contrast is drawn here?

##### Connections

1. Here is that ‘antichrist’ again. What are we told about ‘him’?
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?
3. Is John just being arrogant in 4:6? Why, and on what basis is he making this claim? (Remember 1:1-3)
4. What information is given to us in this passage to help us discern the, to coin a phrase, *fake* spirits?

##### Impact

1. What ‘false’ beliefs have you been exposed to? What temptation do they provide?
2. Discuss what you have learned of the nature of Jesus in 1 John so far?

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
Belief	Love	Obedience



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

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

**Before You Start**

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

**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?**
- 2. Read 4:13-16a. What basic belief is addressed here (again)? Why does it need to be repeated?**
- 3. Read 4:16b-18. What characteristics of love are addressed here?**
- 4. Read 4:19-21. What challenge is here?**

**Connections**

- 1. God is Love! Francis Schaeffer described Christian love as ‘the ultimate apologetic’. Discuss?**
- 2. What does ‘atoning sacrifice’ (some other versions use the word ‘propitiation’) mean?**
- 3. What does v15 mean by ‘acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God’? Is that all there is to it?**
- 4. Who should we love? Why? How?**

**Impact**

- 1. Who is our brother or sister? Are they always lovable?**
- 2. If ‘perfect love drives out fear’ why are we often so fearful of the future?**

<b>What do you learn about each of these in this passage?</b>		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
<b>Belief</b>	<b>Love</b>	<b>Obedience</b>

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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?**

**Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 5:1-12**

**The Text**

- 1. Read 5:1-2. How is this an encouragement to us in our Christian lives?**
- 2. Read 5:3-5. Who overcomes the world? By what power?**
- 3. Read 5:6-9. Who or what bears testimony to Jesus? What is the water and blood that testify?**
- 4. Read 5:10-12. What is the testimony that is given?**

**Connections**

- 1. List under the three headings what this passage has to say about Belief, Obedience and Love?**
- 2. In what way does this passage provide a summary and revision of what the rest of the letter has said?**
- 3. “His commands are not burdensome”. How does that work out in your experience? What makes it true?**
- 4. What makes God out to be a liar?**

**Impact**

- 1. What is the testimony God has given? What do you do with it?**
- 2. How can you work at Belief, Love and Obedience in the next week?**

<b>What do you learn about each of these in this passage?</b>		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
<b>Belief</b>	<b>Love</b>	<b>Obedience</b>

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## Study 9: 1 JOHN 5:13-21

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

#### 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?

#### Listen Carefully to 1 JOHN 5:13-21

#### The Text

1. Read 5:13. Why has John written his 'letter'?
2. Read 5:14-15. Here is the topic of prayer again. What assurances are we given about our prayers?
3. Read 5:16-17. What are we to do about a brother who is sinning? (Notice the proviso.)
4. Read 5:18-20. What final re-assurances does John give his fellow believers?
5. Read 5:21. What are we to keep ourselves from? Why conclude with this instruction?

#### Connections

1. From this 'letter' what does John want to make sure we believe?
2. What is all this about 'a sin that leads to death'? Are not all sins forgiven through the death of Jesus?
3. Read John 20:31 and compare it to 5:13 here. What similarities and differences are there?

#### Impact

1. What have you learned about Christian relationships from 1 John?
2. What idols do you need to keep yourself from?

What do you learn about each of these in this passage?		
<i>The Doctrinal Test</i>	<i>The Social Test</i>	<i>The Moral Test</i>
Belief	Love	Obedience

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