

# TRUTH MATTERS

THE LETTERS OF JOHN

**BIBLE STUDIES - TERM 3, 2025**



These studies seek to provide a balance between understanding the text and sharing of personal experiences and perceptions.

Please consider the **SHARE** and **PRAY** times as an integral part of each study, rather than optional extras.

In many instances, the **SHARE** questions could readily have been incorporated as study questions. However, they were kept separate to encourage reflective interaction from insights gained in the study.

The **PRAY** points are similarly intended to reinforce lessons from the study.

<b>Sermon</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Verses</b>
3 Aug	1	Nothing But the Truth	1:1-10
10 Aug	2	Home Truths	2:1-17
17 Aug	3	Defending Truth	2:18-29
24 Aug	4	Loving Truth	3:1-24
31 Aug	5	Abiding Truth	4:1-21
7 Sept	6	Faithful Truth	5:1-12
15 Sept	7	Prayerful Truth	5:13-21
22 Sept	8	Lasting Truth	2 & 3 John

## Study 1 - NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH - 1 John 1:1-10

What do you understand by the following terms?

*Fake News, Conspiracy Theory, Subjective Truth, Absolute Truth*

### **READ verses 1—7**

1. Why was it important John had heard, seen and touched Jesus?
2. What do you associate with light and with darkness?
3. What does “God is light” mean? Why is it important?
4. How would you explain John’s assertion that it is impossible to walk in darkness and still have fellowship with God?
5. Give an ‘everyday’ example of behaviour John would denounce.

### **READ verses 8—10**

*Warning! Don’t let familiarity with a passage dull its message!*

6. What happens if we mess up or don’t always walk in the light?
7. What does God being faithful mean? Faithful to what?
8. How could forgiveness of our sins be described as just?
9. Is there a difference between forgiveness of sins and purification from unrighteousness? Does it matter?

### **SHARE**

- Even if we accept Christianity is true, how can we know our faith is real?
- Share a recent example of how you chose to ‘walk in the light.’
- What habits/actions could improve your relationship with God and/or with others?

### **PRAY**

- Person 1** that we can walk in the light because we are changed by the truth of the cross.
- Person 2** that the Holy Spirit enables us to be people who speak the truth and confess the reality of our sins.
- Person 3** for God’s forgiveness and active involvement in our lives

## **Study 2 - HOME TRUTHS - 1 JOHN 2: 1-17**

*Every day we are called upon to make numerous lifestyle choices:.*

- How will I use my time, money or resources?
- What do I hope to achieve?
- Are there temptations I should be careful about?
- Where does God fit in?

- *How much forethought do you put into each day's activities?*
- *How often do you reflect upon the consequences of your choices?*

### **READ Verses 1—6**

1. What is the role of an advocate?
  - a) How is Jesus much more than that?
2. How might His role as advocate motivate us to be more godly?
3. How would you explain the relationship between knowing God, keeping His commandments and love?
4. Brainstorm what it means to 'live as Jesus did'(v.6) .

### **READ Verses 7—11**

*The old commandment may be found in verses such as Lev 19:18.*

5. How has the coming of Jesus changed this old commandment?  
(See also John 13:34,35; Eph:5:2)

### **READ Verses 12—17**

6. What does John say about each group that suggests he is referring to more than physical age or position within a family?
7. Why might John think it necessary to remind each group of this?

8. What does lust mean? How does this differ from pride?

a) Suggest examples of what John means in his reference to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and pride of life.

## SHARE

- What influences of the world affect your lifestyle as a Christian?
- How we can deal with them. *Read verse 17 as an encouragement.*
- Think of someone whose walk with Jesus is “real”. How has that challenged or encouraged you about your own commitment?

## PRAY

- Thank God for providing Jesus as our advocate.
- For an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Jesus this week.
- When we are next tempted by ‘things of the world’, that we might remember our identity in Jesus and remain faithful..

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## Study 3 - DEFENDING TRUTH - 1 John 2:18 – 29

- *How susceptible are you to scams?*
- *What indicators might help you recognize a scam?*
- *Because we live in an age of tolerance, some argue we shouldn't split hairs over doctrines. What do you think?*

## READ Verses 18—23

*The name “antichrist” only occurs in John’s epistles [1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3, 2 John 7].*

1. What images come to mind when you hear the word “antichrist”? (*See also 2 Thess 2:3-4, Mth 24:4-5*)

2. Why is it significant that these false teachers, pushing counterfeit Christianity, went out from the church? (v. 19)

a) How might this make it harder to recognise someone as a false teacher?

*John's crucial test for a genuine Christian is accepting "Jesus is the Christ" (v.22)*

3. What do you understand by this expression?

### **READ Verses 24—29**

4. Explain John's view of the role of the Holy Spirit. See also v.20, John 16:13-15

a) How might this contribute to our assurance?

b) How would you assure someone who was doubting their faith?

*John uses the same Greek word, translated as "remain", "continue" or "abide" many times in these verses.*

5. Why is this important for believers? *See also Jn 15:1-8*

6. How would you explain why Christians will be "confident and unashamed" (v.28)?

### **SHARE**

- Any experience with false teachers or counterfeit Christians.
- Ways that help you remain faithful to God.

### **PRAY**

- Thank God for the gift of His Word and the Holy Spirit.
- For the ability to recognize truth and error.
- For courage to remain true to what we heard from the beginning.

## Study 4 - LOVING TRUTH - 1 John Chapter 3

*Think of someone you love unconditionally.*

- *How do you show unconditional love to them?*
- *How dependant is your love on their response?*
- *What happens if they don't reciprocate?*

### **READ Verses 1—3**

*Lavished (v.1) refers to one-sided giving, instead of a return for something earned.*

1. Why might we have trouble understanding how God can love every person, individually?
  - a) How would you explain God's love to someone?

### **READ Verses 4 —10**

2. *Re-read 1 John 1:8-10.* What do these verses tell us about sin?
3. Describe what is said about sin in Chapter 3: 4 – 10
  - a) How has the emphasis changed?
4. What do you think “continue” means in vs 6,9?
  - a) Is this suggesting there is a difference between sin and a lifestyle characterized by sin?
  - b) Is this an important distinction to draw? Why, or why not?
5. Do Christians treat sin seriously enough? Why might we downplay the gravity of our sin?
  - a) How do we know the boundary between being a child of God or a child of the devil? v.10

### **READ Verses 11—15**

*Look up the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-10.*

*Rather than speculating why only one offering was accepted, look for clues as to how the story might emphasise John's teaching.*

6. What can we learn from Cain and Abel about our relationships with God and our brothers and sisters?

**READ Verses 16—24**

7. Why might John assume (some) people would have a guilty conscience? (vs 19,20)
8. What has given you ‘confidence’ in your Christian life? (v.21)

**SHARE**

- Some practical ways we can demonstrate God’s love to others;
- What has worked for you in your effort to live a pure life?

**PRAY**

- Thank God for His love and faithfulness to us.
- For the Holy Spirit’s guidance as we walk in the light. V.24
- For wisdom and opportunities to demonstrate His love to others.

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**Study 5 - ABIDING TRUTH - 1 John Chapter 4**

- *How would you respond if someone claimed to have received a special message from God?*
- *Would it be different if this message was about you?*
- *Does God ‘speak’ to us today? Explain your answer.*

**READ Verses 1 —6**

1. What do you understand by “spirit” and “false prophet”? (v.1)
2. How might our situation differ from John’s original audience? (v.6) What is similar?
3. How should we test the spirits today?

### **READ Verses 7 —11**

4. List the ways “love” and “God” are linked together.
5. How should God’s love affect the way we interact with others?

### **READ Verses 12 —18**

*This section is about assurance. ‘Lives in’ equals ‘abides’*

*v.12 God abides in us.*

*vs.13,15,16 mutual abiding – we abide in Him and He in us.*

6. If (or when!) we question God’s love, what should counter our doubts?
7. How does this section throw light on the meaning of God’s “love is made complete” (or perfected)? (vs 12, 17)

### **READ Verses 19 —21**

8. How effective are these verses in summarising ch.4?
  - a) What do they reveal about John’s concerns for the church?

### **SHARE**

- What is your typical response to fear?
- Share a situation where you allowed fear to control your thoughts or actions.
- Recall a time when God’s love overcame your fears.
- How could you support someone questioning God’s love amidst a crisis?

### **PRAY Thank God:**

- For the revelation we have received in the Bible.
- That we don’t need to fear the future because nothing can separate us from His love (Rom 8:31-39).

## **Study 6 - FAITHFUL TRUTH - 1 John 5:1-12**

*Think of a close relationship you have with another person.*

- *How do you know that person cares about you?*
- *Conversely, how do you make others feel confident in their relationship with you?*

### **READ Verses 1—5**

1. How would you explain what it means to love God? Write down your answer to use later.
2. Brainstorm as many commandments of God as you can (in a few minutes!)
3. Suggest a commandment, or commandments, which would help (or has helped) you love others better.
4. Why might someone find (at least some of) His commandments “burdensome” (v.3)?
5. How might the references in vs 4 & 5 to “overcomes the world” affect our attitude? (*See also 1 John 2:15 – 17*)

### **READ Verses 6 —12**

*The meaning of Spirit, water and blood (v.8) is the subject of much debate.*

6. Spend a few moments speculating on what he might mean.
7. The focus of these verses is “testimony”. What is a “testimony”?
  - a) How many times does John refer to this concept?
  - b) What big point is he making by emphasising this?
  - c) Why is John so adamant about this?What are the consequences of our decision?

8. Compare the following quotation with your answer to question 1 above.

*‘Loving God is not saying we love Him,  
Nor is it seeking an emotional experience.  
Loving God means doing what he says.  
God’s love language is love for others.  
That was what he did in sending Jesus –  
where he demonstrated his love for others.  
He wants us to show our love for him – or tells us  
how to love him - by loving others.’*

Collated from several sources

Discuss any differences to your original answer.

## **SHARE**

- Which characteristics of a Christian (*such as practicing righteousness, not practicing sin, loving others, overcoming the world*) do you have troubles with?
- How does the prospect of eternal life impact your lifestyle?

## **PRAY**

Thank God for:

- His unfailing love for us;
- The confidence we enjoy through Jesus;
- For the strength, wisdom and resolve to remain faithful to Him.

## Study 7 PRAYERFUL TRUTH 1 John 5: 13-21

- What is the meaning of your name? (Google it!)
- How do you respond when someone uses your name? Why?

### READ Verses 13 —15

1. What does John's reference to "the name" in v.13 say about Jesus?
2. Using your understanding of the whole letter, why might John want to emphasise this?
3. *We can have confidence in prayer, provided it is "according to his will"* (v.14).  
How do you determine God's will? (*see also Ch 3:21,22*)
4. What other 'conditions' does the Bible suggest for prayer?  
See also Mth 21:22; Jn 15:7; Jam 4:3; Ph 4:6,7.

### READ Verses 16 —17

5. Before you speculate about the meaning of 'sin that leads to death', read vs 16 – 17 aloud and replace "sin that does **not** lead to death" with the words '**common sin**' and "sin that **does** lead to death" with the words '**fatal sin**'.
  - a) Who is John asking them to pray for?
  - b) Can you think of someone you should not pray for because they committed "sin that leads to death"? Why, or why not?
  - c) Is there anyone God is incapable of saving?
  - d) Now you can speculate as to whom John might include in the sin that leads to death? See also Ch.2:18-26
  - e) Without detracting from the assurance we might gain from vs 14,15, is it possible John has a narrower focus or even a dual focus? *See v16b*

## READ Verses 18 —21

*One of John's goals is to assure believers, whose faith may have been shaken by false teaching. On 38 occasions he tells them what they should already know or need to know. The word "know" in Greek is **Gnosko**. His choice of language may have been influenced by the need to refute Gnosticism..*

*The **Gnostic** error taught:*

- *The physical world was evil, so Jesus did not come in the flesh;*
- *We can only 'know' God in the spiritual world;*
- *Only Gnostics had the secret knowledge necessary to know God;*
- *As the physical world is evil, our earthly behaviour is irrelevant.*

6. List what John wants them to "know" in these verses.

a) How does this contradict Gnostic false teaching?

7. What is an idol (v.21)?

a) Can you think of any idols in your life?

8. How might you justify this warning as a fitting conclusion to the issues raised in 1 John?

## SHARE

- What issues challenge your faith?
- What more might you want to 'know'?
- How easy is it for you to discuss your doubts/concerns/questions with others?

## PRAY

- Give thanks for the comfort of knowing God.
- For the privilege of being able to bring our concerns to Him.
- For the assurance flowing from His love for us.

## **Study 8 - LASTING TRUTH - 2 & 3 John**

- *How important is truth to you?*
- *Are there different levels of truth?*
- *How might what someone believes affect your relationship/friendship with them?*
  - ❖ *Does your answer change if they:*
    - a) *have no faith?*
    - b) *profess to be a Christian?*

### **READ 2 John Verses 1—4**

1. How many times does John mention “truth” ?
  - a) What does he say about “truth”?
  - b) Why is this important?

### **READ 2 John Verses 5 — 13**

2. What are we
  - a) encouraged to do? and
  - b) warned against?
  - c) What are the consequences in each case?

### **READ 3 John Verses 1— 4**

3. What similarities can you find to 2 John 1 - 4?

### **READ 3 John Verses 5—9**

4. What do we learn about Christian ministry?
5. How would you respond to someone like Diotrephes in our church?
  - a) What problems might you anticipate?

### In 2 & 3 John

6. How does the message about welcoming people differ?
7. What test/s does John give for differentiating between visitors?

### **SHARE**

- What “core” Christian beliefs would you stand up for if they were challenged?
- What other beliefs might you consider “peripheral” to someone’s salvation?
- Share any thoughts/verses in 2 or 3 John which stood out for you.

### **PRAY**

- Give thanks for God’s grace, mercy and peace;
- That his Holy Spirit may help us to walk in love.
- That we will be faithful to the truth we have been taught

*because*

*Truth Matters!*