



**ourTUESDAY**

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*the trio*

1, 2 & 3 JOHN

FEBRUARY 2018

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*the trio*

1,2 & 3 JOHN

## introduction

Friends! Sisters!

Lanie Beth here! The holidays are wonderful and the New Year starts with such gusto that by the time we get to February we've all lost a little steam. Or maybe that's just me? A few of my goals for the 2018 are to get my closet in a workable condition- I'd like to mumble something about a creative brain needs space to decompress or something like that but the truth is that it's just messy! I want to get my kids outside as much as possible once the weather warms up. I think it's time for Brad and I to step in to some of the things that the Lord is calling us to, but we've been too afraid to take the plunge. And last, but certainly not least, continue to write and serve you ladies here at Our Tuesday.

I can't tell you what this gathering has done in my heart and I pray it's moved yours, as well. We have lots coming for this year, and some exciting things on the horizon, and we are asking the Lord to increase our capacity. Will you join us in that prayer? Not just for OT but for your life as well? That no matter the season, no matter the circumstances that are all around, that you'd ask the Lord to move in your own life. I pray for you to have strengthened resolve, brave prayers and open hands as you ask God what he has in store for you and your family. Soft hearts and calloused knees are some of the most overlooked blessings from the Lord.

In the same way that you pray for your family or your community, John prayed for his people, too. He was authentic, endearing and fervent in his plea for the church to not forget who Jesus was. As the last disciple to walk on earth, John had the image and personhood of Christ seared into his memory. This isn't a story that's been passed down to him over years, this is his account and desire to see the Christians of that day not be swayed by the Gnostic collective. The Gnostics basically thought they knew everything about everything. Ever met someone like that? Super enjoyable, right? Well, they fired John up. He was not going to let them bully his Christian community into thinking that they didn't know Jesus.

And thus 1, 2 and 3 John were born. The letters are honest and forthright. Simple yet complex. Wide ranging in topic and theologically rich yet palatable. In my mind, The Trio (1, 2 and 3 John) are a sort of friend that I think you'll just love so I can't wait to introduce you to him at a party. I've always fancied myself as a friend matchmaker of sorts!

Know that this study has been prayed over, edited and even cried over, yet it wouldn't be in your hands right now without two ladies I simply must thank. Jennifer Strawn- for your guidance and eagle eye editing abilities....you are a wealth of grammar knowledge but also theological wisdom. Thanks for putting up with me and my terrible sentence structure. And Hannah Chandler- girl, you take after our great and wonderful God in that you are one of the most creative people I've ever met. You make a rough draft turn into something worth looking at! Thank you for your late nights and early mornings bringing these studies to life. You both are indispensable to me. Please always be my friends.

That's about enough babbling from me. Thank you for coming back to scripture. Our time is never wasted in these pages. Praying for you. Fighting with you. Rooting you on.

Let's do this,  
*Lanie Beth*



## a note from jeff & courtney

Hi Ladies!!!! We are SO excited to be back at Our Tuesday!!!

Jeff and I wanted to share a quick note with you all about what the Father has been speaking to us regarding worship. Worship within our hearts, our homes and our families. As I was praying for our family one morning, I remembered the scripture Matthew 5:15-16, *“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on it’s stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.”*

As I was praying that morning that my family would be a light to others, I heard the father say, “Lighthouses cannot shine to the lost if the fire is not first ignited in the home.”

Jesus! What a sweet revelation! He stirred me that morning. He awakened a fresh urgency in my spirit to fill my home and my heart with a burning light. We have always worshipped with our children when we had a little bit of extra time before bedtime or before school in the morning but this word, this revelation brought a fresh excitement and desire for intimacy. One of our favorite things to do with the children is to pull up youtube on our TV -this can be done on a laptop, phone, or just a worship CD is great too- and we dance. We dance hard. I feel like, for my children, watching a Bethel worship service or a Hillsong concert on the TV really helps them to connect and get excited about worshipping.

Now this is also something that we do individually, as well. I am a visual person so turning on a worship service that I can see really helps me to dance, to sing loud, and clap along with the crowd. Who says your “quiet time” actually has to be quiet???. Jeff on the other hand loves to listen to music with some headphones in, drowning out the world. However you prefer to open your heart and sing to our creator, remember, we are stirring up our spirits. We are “commanding our souls to sing.” Worship in the home shifts the atmosphere of our hearts so that we are able to put Matthew 5:16 into practice.

One of my best friends told me one time, “It will never become comfortable in public until it is common in private.”



IT WILL NEVER BECOME  
COMFORTABLE IN  
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*on worship*

Worship and intimacy must be common in the home and in the secret place for us and our children to feel comfortable enough to shout it from the rooftops. How amazing would it be to raise up a generation of unashamed lovers of Jesus? How amazing would it be to become that generation?

Keep singing! Keep dancing!

*-Jeff and Courtney*

# The Pastoral Epistle

HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE THE FATHER HAS  
LAVISHED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED  
CHILDREN OF GOD! AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE!  
- 1 JOHN 3:1

## | THE PASTORAL EPISTLE |

Hello there!

We are getting back into the groove of Bible study! I am so glad you're here! My name is Lanie Beth and I'll be your guide through the fascinating landscape that is 1, 2 & 3 John. To start our 14-day ride together I thought we could take the first day to read all 3 books. (They are short- I promise!) After that, take a minute to write down any verses you'd like to take a deeper look at or any that seem familiar.

**Take about 10-15 minutes to read all three books (1 John is 5 chapters and 2 & 3 are only a few paragraphs each).**

**Write out the verses that stick out to you as ones you've heard repeated before. Or perhaps only heard the paraphrased versions.**

Here are a few of mine!

> 1:5 1:9 2:17 3:1 4:11 4:18-19 5:2 5:14

MacDonald writes, 'While John does use simple words, the thoughts he expresses are often deep, and sometimes difficult to understand. As we study this book we should pray that the Lord will help us to grasp the meaning of His word and obey the truth as He reveals it to us.'

**Pray to close your time today and ask the Lord to show you the depth in the simple and to make the complex better understandable that you might gain wisdom and learn more of what he has for you in The Trio. Ask him for a specific prayer request you have for the next 14 days.**

He hears you, sister! I'll see you tomorrow.

**For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

*Hebrews 4:12  
(ESV)*

# Word of Life

WE PROCLAIM TO YOU WHAT WE HAVE  
SEEN AND HEARD, SO THAT YOU ALSO MAY  
HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US.

- 1 JOHN 1:3

**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 1:1-4**

Our passage for today, 1 John 1:1-4 establishes a theological beachhead. A beachhead is a defended position on a beach taken from the enemy by landing forces, from which an attack can be launched. John was basically flexing his knuckles, clearing his throat and putting ink on his quill as he started into his diatribe on the personhood of Jesus Christ. John's ministry was the oral proclamation of his personal eyewitness testimony of Jesus. His life was spent telling of the Jesus that he saw with his own eyes, listened to with his own ears and touched the nail scarred hands with his own hands. John knew to his bones that Jesus was who he said he was.

**1 John 1:1 - Write the 4 ways John experienced Christ.**

**How do you best experience the Lord? Quiet Study, beautiful music, a good meal, nature or even painting are all ways to experience God.**

*The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and appeared to us. (v.2)*

In this seemingly simple statement, John has assured us that 'life appeared' and because 'life appeared' we can 'proclaim to you the eternal life' and that the life 'which was with the Father' came from Heaven to earth to be with us. Wow. Let that sit with you for a moment. This verse is a perfect example of simple words combined to construct deep thoughts. Sometimes, simple is better. Goodness knows that Jesus was always trying to get this point across in the simplest words (that everyone might understand) while conveying the vastness that is heaven come to earth.

**Write verse 1 John 1:3 here:**

**Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.**

*Proverbs 28:14*

John wants fellowship with the believers. It's the ancient version of 'friends are friends forever'. In fact, John asserts that not only should believers have fellowship together, but that in remembering and contemplating on the life and death of Jesus Christ, that we 'make our joy complete' (v.4). If I have something wonderful that happens to me, I usually want to tell someone so that we can enjoy it together. Sometimes it's my husband or a friend or my mom, but someone needs to know. That's part of making the joy complete. Think about it this way as well, part of what makes Christmas so great isn't just Christmas morning, it's the lead up, the conversations, the celebrations, the cultural reminders of what's to come. All of those things combine to make the joy of Christmas complete. Same principle here. We don't just hear about Jesus' life and stop there. We talk about it, write about it, preach about it and encourage others to do so, as well. That's all the by-product but still part of the gift!

**Is there an event that happened in your life that you needed to talk about to 'make your joy complete'? (ex. graduation, wedding, baby, job promotion, etc.)**

Today's lesson was John just getting warmed up. And let me assure you that he, in fact, gets warmed up. As we close for today, ask the Lord to help you make the joy that you find in him complete. Start a conversation with a new friend. Make that phone call that you need to make. Encourage someone in a tough season.

Same time. Same place. Tomorrow.

# *Walking in the Light*

GOD IS LIGHT AND IN HIM  
THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.  
- 1 JOHN 1:5





**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 1:5-10**

Hello to you on this third day of The Trio! I hope these words find you well, rested and content. If they don't, I pray they will bring you hope and peace in the midst of your circumstances. You are exactly where you need to be, in the pages of scripture, in order to find rest in the difficult seasons. Speaking of difficult seasons, John knew a thing or two about those. Remember how we talked about our author, John, also being the writer of the Gospel of John? That particular gospel was written in John's early life. He was young and wild and free. Or rather young-ish, not super wild and one of the original 12 disciples. Doesn't have quite the same ring to it though, does it?

Due to the fact that our author actually walked with Jesus, literally and figuratively, there is a difference in the way John references Jesus versus our man, Paul, who while alive during Jesus' life, did not know him personally. John's account isn't hearsay or rumored. He knew Jesus' cadence when he walked, his rhythm when he spoke and the words that he used most often.

*Enter 1 John 1:5 onto the scene: 'This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.'*

John is telling the readers of his letters and now countless scripture devotees in the centuries since - We heard this from HIM. And now we declare it to YOU.

**Him -> You**

**That's the transmission.**

One of the many beautiful parts of our protestant faith is that we believe that we have full access to God. Anytime. Anywhere. There is no priest required- we are the Royal Priesthood of Believers.

**Take a minute to write 1 Peter 2:9 here:**

I feel like there is someone reading this that needs to be reminded that in God, there is no darkness. This world can feel so dark and oppressive at times, yet God's own character sets the standard for what is right. No matter what you're walking through, or sitting through, or barely being able to breathe through, there is purpose in your suffering. God is not wasting your time on trials that have nothing to do with your life. This isn't homework in high school. There is a reason for EVERYTHING. I'll say it again.... There is a reason for EVERYTHING. Take heart. He's all light and no darkness. He would never allow something that doesn't have eternal value.

*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness,  
we lie and do not live by the truth. (v.6)*

This statement feels a bit like a mic-drop. There are no qualifiers. If you claim to have fellowship and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. I would like to point out that John writes, if we 'walk in darkness'. He's not referencing honest mistakes. His point is around how our lives are wired. How we function every day. Everyone makes mistakes- goodness knows I'm the queen of them. John's point is that we are responsible for how we orient our lives so that we are living in a righteous rhythm, not a path of secrets, manipulation and deception.

**Write verse 7 for me:**

So verse 7 feels like two thoughts mashed together, but it actually is woven together beautifully when we take it in context. First thought: if we walk in the light then we have fellowship with one another. Second thought: the blood of Jesus purifies our sins. Based on my research, this verse is alluding to the benefits of walking in the light. Think about community, friends, maybe family but not necessarily. John is pretty black and white on this light vs. dark comment. There's no third option. Because he's so cut and dry on this principle, he knows that living according to the precepts of the Lord is how we have true community. He also knows that sometimes our friends tell it like it is. Ya know what I mean?

**Whoever claims  
to live in him  
must walk as  
Jesus did.  
*1 John 1:6***

Thank the Lord for those kind of friends who can bring everything right back into focus! The blood of Jesus purifies all sin, and allows us to have healthy relationships. It's a combo situation. Can't have one without the other. Acknowledging our propensity to sin is humbling, which makes us a better friend; living in the light of grace makes us a better spouse; and honesty about our undesirable traits enables us to extend kindness when others exhibit those same traits.

**How we react when other people fail, speaks directly to the condition of our heart. How can walking in the light with community around us help us to guide the condition of our hearts?**

Over the course of this study, I really think you're going to fall in love with John as an author but also Jesus in a fresh way. One of the things I love about John is that, although the words he uses are fairly simple and straightforward, there's a depth and richness to it that is almost surprising. Take verse 8 for example....*'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.'* Doesn't get much more straightforward than that! Ever had those people in your life who are the perfect parents, the perfect spouse and the perfect Christian - just ask them! John debunks that within the first chapter of his writings. Pretending like you've got it together is deceptive and misleading, but even worse than that, it means that you don't have the light in you. People who have been redeemed sing a song of redemption that is woven in and out of every conversation. Sometimes it's subtle and sometimes it's as profound as a testimony from the stage. *But they talk about it.*

**Verse 9 is probably one you've heard if you grew up in church but maybe never knew where it was found. Write it out here so you can see it spelled out:**

I pray you've felt the offering of hope today. Before you end your time with the Lord, ask him to help you live in the light today and I'll see you back tomorrow.

## *Living as Jesus Did*

BUT IF ANYBODY DOES SIN, WE HAVE ONE  
WHO SPEAKS TO THE FATHER IN OUR DEFENSE  
- JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS ONE.  
- 1 JOHN 2:1B

**TODAY'S READING** -1 *John 2:1-11*

Hey there! Welcome to day 4 of our study. Since we only have 14 days together, you're already killing it. Thanks for coming back to the pages of scripture with me. My guess is that you're a bit like me....looking for some encouragement and a fresh word from the Lord. Ask him before we start to meet you! I know he will!

Please take a minute to read through our passage for today. I love how John uses terms of endearment all throughout this book. Our first verse starts out: '*My dear children...*'. Spoken like a father of the faith, John is older and wiser at this point in his life. It's worth noting that age doesn't necessitate wisdom, but in the case of our beloved John, wisdom is teeming from his words. He about can't keep it all together to get to his point because he so badly wants you and me to know that he loves us and that Jesus is worth it. It's hard not to be fond of someone like that!

**Take a minute to write 2:1-2 below. They are so powerful that I want you to see them in your own handwriting.**

I see verse 1 as something that I'd say to my own daughters. 'I don't want you to sin, but when you do, I'll always be on your side and fight for you.' If you've never had someone fight for you that way, take a minute to let the Lord speak to that place in your heart.

**In two verses we find that he uses 4 names for God. Write them below:**

1 -

2 -

3 -

4 -

Here's the thing about a God that is so multidimensional: We can take great comfort in knowing that he can handle our humanness. Our desire to connect with our God on varying levels that are personal, yet collective. John is making sure that we know that he made restitution for our sins on the cross but also for the sins of the whole world. We are wise to remember that we are loved, sought after and our debt has been paid. We are also wise to remember that he did that for the rest of the world, too. Let's not feel less valuable by that fact, sisters. Let's find a commonality and unity in the fact that God loved us all deeply and personally. That's our Savior!

Our next portion of scripture is a little sharp around the edges so let's all take a deep breath, hold hands and sing Kumbaya. It's gonna be ok.

*The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his words, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.'*

1 John 2:4-5

I don't know about you but I don't fancy being called a liar. Most people don't. Even in the original language of our author, a blow like that is offensive. There's a strong biblical correlation between what we know and what we do. In 2018, there's less of a relationship between the two. We are scared to 'judge' anyone so we shy away from even asking our believing friends questions about their life choices. Who are we to judge, anyway, right? John, however, is not as shy as myself. His point? If you say that you know Jesus, then you do what he commands. End of story. If you don't, then your actions don't line up with your words and that's a recipe for a liar.

BUT, if anyone obeys his words, then God's love is made complete in him. There is faith and action in the equation. We won't get into the hotly debated theological argument but suffice it to say that, if I went around talking about how much I loved my husband yet nothing about my life spoke the same message, you'd have reason to believe I wasn't telling the truth. When we are honest and forthcoming with the positions of our hearts, our lives and actions naturally line up. It really is that simple.

John ends this thought with a summary. *'This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.'* Based on my reading, this is not a salvation issue but rather a righteous living issue. We can't 'behave' our way into heaven. That's not what this passage is about. These verses are about living and thriving with Christ as the center of our lives and taking people along the journey with us. None of that can be done without a high level of authenticity and vulnerability.

**His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.**

***2 Peter 1:3***

Starting in verse 7, John is back at his game. ‘*Dear friends...*’ He’s focusing on an old command that Jesus taught- to love one another. The Gnostics (a new type of religion that focused on knowledge and mystical awareness) were counterfeiting love and parading their teachings around as being new. John was teaching his people something we’d all be wise to remember: If you are having a hard time remembering, then go back to the beginning. What do we recall that Jesus taught? Sometimes old commandments can feel new again when the Holy Spirit breathes on them. Remembering is a God given gift!

Verses 9 -11 are convicting and pinpoint an emotion that few of us want to talk about. Hate. It’s not the easiest topic to bring up over that vanilla latte with a friend. It’s tough for me to come up with a bigger buzzword for our culture right now. Unless it’s Love. Between the two we are volleyed back and forth in a moral game of who will give up first. The world’s version of love/hate are different from God’s version. We know that God is love (1 John 4:16). In him there is no darkness (1 John 1:5) and he so loved us that he made a way for us to have a relationship with him (John 3:16).

Our man John says that you can’t claim to have love for everyone except your (figurative) brother and still walk in the light. There’s not an exception list that gets you off the hook from those especially squirrely people. Isn’t that sad!? Goodness knows I have days where I can feel like I’m rockin’ and rollin’ with my friends and family...everything is blue skies and birds singing. I’m loving everyone! Then ‘he’ comes along. Or ‘she’ comes along. And all that love and those blue skies feel like they shrivel up into a distant memory and it’s all I can do to be cordial and, dare I say, ‘nice’. Here’s John’s point- you have dark parts in your heart and those parts need to be exposed to light so that you won’t stumble. Think about it as if it were snow and ice on the ground. Snow melts when the sun hits it and the roads become dry and drivable. But for the areas of road that remain in the shade, as the snow melts it becomes like ice. And ice is slippery and dangerous to drive or walk on. Same thing with our hearts. If we don’t expose all of it to the light, then the parts that aren’t exposed simply become cause for stumbling.

Today, don’t let the world dictate who and how you love. And don’t let those parts of your heart remain untouched by Jesus. Things get slippery and dangerous when we follow the world’s commands and not the commands our heavenly father gives us.

**All light. No dark. All love. No hate. All truth. No lies. All of you.  
Nothing held back. Jesus changes everything.**

# Family of God

THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES PASS AWAY,  
BUT THE MAN WHO DOES  
THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER.  
- 1 JOHN 2:17



**TODAY'S READING** -1 *John 2:12-17*

This morning I actually got up, did my coffee thing and sat down on my brown couch that is sagging in the middle from years of love, and didn't feel like I'd been hit by a bus. Can I get an amen? Lately, I've been feeling so run down and exhausted. I'm sure I could write it off as the weather (snow in Georgia!?) or just a 'busy season', but let's be honest- life is a busy season. Of course, there are certain weeks that feel like your schedule is showing you who is boss. And other times we think that filling our time somehow makes it more valuable. Neither is good. There's a difference between swimming laps and treading water. Both are wet. Both are in the pool. Both are exhausting. But one is training you for something and building endurance, while the other is just annoying enough to get chlorine in your hair.

**Take a minute to read 1 John 2:12-17.**

John, and Jesus for that matter, want us to stay focused and move forward. In other words, swim the laps and be exhausted. That's ok. But don't just tread water, because you won't move forward in life and you'll still be worn out! Let me just be really honest: Our passage for today is going to seem like we are treading water. It might not make sense the first time you read it, well it didn't to me at least. But let's trust that every letter of every word in the Bible is intentional and purposeful that we may not gloss over this passage just because, at first glance, it may appear that it isn't speaking specifically to women. Although the words little children, young men and fathers are used, these passages are very much intended for our ears, as well!

**Give me a sentence that you feel describes the climate for women in today's society.**

**What does inclusivity mean to you?**

**If the 'male and female' vocabulary isn't used, does that mean that one is ostracized from the conversation?**

I'm fully aware that this is a hot button topic, so please let me dispel any tension rising up in you. Of course we are pro-women, this is women's bible study! But please don't ever confuse being pro-woman with being anti-man. It's elementary to think that we must cut out half the earth's population to support the other. John is writing about spiritual families. And it is Biblical that the head of the household is male. If you come from a home where that power was abused, please know that I am deeply sorry. Painful wounds arise when concepts like this are discussed but that doesn't mean that we must pretend as though they are not there. Moving forward in light of God's grace is one of the top benefits to being a child of God! We can move forward! We can swim the laps and leave the treading of water to someone else! Women play a vital role in the family of God. VITAL. We can celebrate other roles in the family of God only when we fully understand and appreciate our role. Otherwise we become desperate and backed into a corner. And anyone backed into a corner naturally lashes out of fear and distress. Let's not be women who lash out. Let's appreciate our role fully so that we might also appreciate everyone else's role.

**She (Mary) will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**  
*Matthew 1:21*

**There are three categories that John discusses. Below, please write the purpose mentioned in the verses for each.**

**Dear Children of God:** (2:12 & 2:13c)

**Fathers:** (2:13a & 14a)

**Young Men:** (2:13b & 2:14b)

Did any of those directives stick out to you? It is interesting to me that John jumps from these categories, that were sort of plopped into the middle of his letter, to 3 verses on not loving the world.

**Read 2:15-17 and write any phrases that stick out to you.**

Honestly, all three verses are Tweetable content. Let's look at the end of verse 16.

*For everything in the world.....  
and the boasting of what he has and does-  
comes not from the Father but from the world.*

How can we know the difference between simply talking about what is going on in our lives and 'boasting about what we have and do'? It can be a blurry line sometimes. The difference is always the heart, and I know that you know that. This isn't groundbreaking news. But in situations where the line seems too blurry to decipher, we always look to the heart of the person or situation. And sometimes, we have to look real long and hard. \*grin\* The world seemingly offers a lot. Sort of like the menu at the Cheesecake Factory. (Who knew there were so many options!?) Yet, it never delivers the way we think it will. The world does not and cannot have our best interest in mind. That can only come from the Lord. Even the most persuasive companies, people, relationships- without Jesus, there's always an ulterior motive.

And if we don't have Jesus and operate in His spirit, we also will have deceptions that run so deep we start to believe them ourselves. That's when we know we need a wakeup-call, sisters.

**Write 1 John 2:17 here for me.**

The world will pass away. These desires will pass. Don't believe me? Think back on something you really wanted from 3 years ago. Hard to even remember something you wanted, isn't it? Much less to think about it satisfying us for that long. It's almost comical really.

*'... The man (or woman) who does the will of God lives forever.'*

We know life doesn't last forever here on earth. But life eternal lasts forever with Christ in heaven. Let's promise ourselves and the Lord to not focus on the seen but the unseen (2 Corinthians 4:18) because we know that is what God sees.

**Father, give me eyes to rightly see the world around me. Let kindness, truth telling and love abound and let it start with me. Amen.**

# Warning Against Anti-Christ's

BUT YOU HAVE AN ANOINTING  
FROM THE HOLY ONE, AND ALL  
OF YOU KNOW THE TRUTH.

- 1 JOHN 2:20

## | WARNING AGAINST ANTI-CHRISTS |

### TODAY'S READING -1 John 2:18-27

Good day to you! Does it make you feel all warm and fuzzy on the inside to see the heading for Day 5 and know that we are going to talk about the Warning Against Anti-Christ?!? What could be more exciting than that topic! Kidding. Sort of. We are definitely going to talk through those warnings but hopefully you won't think about it like an episode of *The Walking Dead*.

**Read through our passage a few times just to get a good grasp on it before we start. If you feel comfortable, highlight or underline key sentences that stick out to you.**

It is actually an interesting topic that I think may shed some light on current situations. Let's give two definitions before we dive in today.

**The Anti-Christ:** A single person. Exhibited as The Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9. This man will represent an incarnation of Satan during the end-times. Counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders will characterize this man. We don't believe this man has lived or is living. His appearance will signal the fulfillment of Revelation.

**Anti-Christ (aka. the spirit of anti-christ or a anti-christian spirit):** Many in number have been on the earth since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The multitude of people with this anti-christian spirit is what John is most concerned about. A sign of the end times is that there will be multitudes of people with anti-christian spirits. We will reference this concept again in 1 John 4:3.

When your friends ask you what you're reading these days, you can tell them you're reading about the incarnation of Satan. So. You know...That's fun. In all seriousness, John was not joking around about this topic. Remember how we said that by the time our beloved disciple wrote these letters that he had lived a lot of life? At minimum he was 65 years old, having walked with Jesus in his 20s. His warning doesn't fall on deaf ears as his readers would have been able to feel what he was talking about even though there were no news programs or constant updates to be seen.

We can heed warnings and understand eschatology (study of the end-times) while not being a paranoid conspiracy theorist. I say that because in verse 18, John is talking to us as a Father or Grandfather figure again, telling us that the end is near. In verses 18-19, John is making it clear that these people were once a part of their body of believers, or church, and now they have left and gone off on their own. I would venture to say that they physically went off on their own- there

weren't a dozen other churches to choose from in those days- and they probably mentally went off on their own, spouting out enough of perversion of Christianity to be dangerous. Christianity twinged with self-righteousness is not of Christ. Nothing about Jesus came so that we might do as we so please. It's always been about other people. John's point is that, if one of those people comes and tries to sell you a bag of tricks that looks like Christ but doesn't function as Christ did, you've been hoodwinked.

**Don't buy it! 1 John 2:20-21 tells us why...write it here:**

**If we had to divide today's reading into three sections I think it would be as follows. Please read and then give each section your own title.**

1 - 1 John 2:15-19 -

2 - 1 John 2:20-23 -

3 - 1 John 2:24-27 -

Section 1 focuses on the warning against antichrists. Section 2 focuses on the anointing that believers have from the Holy One (God). Section 3 focuses on steadfastness of Christian beliefs.

Exercises like this always help me read for comprehension. If you have been a believer, or in church for a long time, it can be easy to gloss over without reading to understand. Take the extra few minutes to make sure it sinks in. This is how we sit in the Word of God and rightly divide truth.

**Quickly look up and jot down 2 Timothy 2:15 here:**

**Which verses were impactful to you today? Why?**

I pray you're reminded today that you do have an anointing on you from the Holy One and you do know the truth. The following would be a great couple of verses to memorize:

*See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.  
If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.  
And this is what he promised us—even eternal life. - 1 John 2:24-25*

**I do not write  
to you because  
you do not know  
the truth, but  
because you do  
know it...**  
*1 John 2:21*

How many times do things get overwhelming in life? Circumstances can be going smoothly and then panic sets in before we have time to hardly speak against it. The two verses above remind us to go back to the beginning. Remember what the Lord has told you. If he hasn't spoken to you recently, think back to the last time you were sure you heard his voice. That's your point of reference. Start there. My friend Lindsay in Missouri always reminds me of this truth. Aren't friends like that a gift? I pray you have someone in your life like that, as well.

Our last verse (v. 27) is what we will end with today. *'As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real-not counterfeit- just as he has taught you, remain in him.'*

**What does anointing mean to you? Can you give an example of it in your life or in the life of someone close to you?**

We are obviously big students here at Our Tuesday. There are scholars and prophets and professors that have gone before us that have more intelligence in their pinkies than I could ever hope to have in my whole body. However. And that's a capital-H, However...

The basis for all knowledge is knowing God. And we learn the purest version of God through His Word and by our relationship with him. Everything else is commentary. God tells us who we are. We don't have to find ourselves when we know him. God makes sure we know through countless examples in scripture that it's ok to mess up but it's not ok to be disobedient. That he loves us more than we can measure.

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:13-16.**

He is real and His love is real. It's not counterfeit and it's not limited to what we understand. In prayer today, thank him that he defines who you are and that you don't have to go around asking the world who you are any longer. There is another way.

**Jesus, I will no longer think \_\_\_\_\_ about myself, no matter what \_\_\_\_\_ says. I will believe I am \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_ because you tell me I am. I take you at your word, Father. Amen.**



# *Confident & Unashamed*

HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE THE FATHER  
HAS LAVISHED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD  
BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD! AND  
THAT IS WHAT WE ARE!

- 1 JOHN 3:1

**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 2:28-3:10**

Hey you! You're looking lovely today! I sure do hope you're enjoying (& learning) as much as I am from John. Talk about a wealth of knowledge and truth in an often overlooked book! Sometimes the hardest truths to digest are the simplest. Restraint is often what defines gifted communicators. Anyone can say or write anything and everything that comes to mind- a wise and true communicator knows when to speak, what to say and not to say, and how to say it so that it's like a balm to wounds (Proverbs 12:18) and not salt to wounds. That perfectly sums up our main man, John. He has a kindness and a rhythm to his writing that is endearing and comforting. No doubt he had kind eyes and a warm smile.

**Go ahead and read our portion of scripture for today. Look for any verses that are familiar to you and be sure to make note of those below.**

Our first verse today jumps right into a thought that immediately puts a lump in my throat. You? Read 1 John 2:28 again, real quick. I'll wait right here.

I know, right!? Whew. When we strip all the layers of life back and we have a lucid moment to look through time and see ourselves standing before God at the end of our lives, don't we all just want to be confident and unashamed. Those two words are moving and provide fresh wind in my sails. It is SO HARD to remain confident in the work of Christ on this earth while also being unashamed of who God made you to be. A synonym would be unapologetic. Oh, if we could be humble and unapologetic. Confident and unashamed. But if we stay focused on Jesus. I mean, locked in, zeroed in on who he is and the guidelines he gives us to live a full and healthy life. Sister, we will be confident and unashamed in the present and when we see him again one day! Goosebumps!

**Is there anyone in your life that you feel embodies this trait? Confident and unashamed? Humble and unapologetic?**

Remember how I asked you to make note of any verses that sounded familiar in your first reading? This was one that I was thinking of that I learned growing up. My NIV puts it this way:

*'How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,  
that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!'* 1 John 3:1

**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him shall have everlasting life.**  
*John 3:16*

The last 6 words of the second sentence are what get me. *‘And that is what we are!’* Ever wonder what you are? Who you are? Why you are the way you are? Verses like this remind us that there’s always an answer in scripture. This is hope soaked in confidence, brimming with love: We are his children! He loves us! He wants good for us! He’s on our side!

Verse 3 is a plea for purity. Christ’s blood and sacrifice makes us clean and pure at salvation but there is a life of purity that comes along with God’s standard for righteousness. Believers don’t live in habitual sin. It’s not about being perfect—John makes that super clear—but it is about not living in the pattern of sin day in and day out. In the Disciples Study Bible, the writers put it this way: That Jesus came from heaven to earth to destroy what Satan had accomplished and to atone (pay the debt) for our sins. We don’t usually think about Satan having accomplished things because that’s not the prettiest picture.

**How does that make you feel? Do you agree?**

1 John 3:5-6 words this concept pretty plainly. *‘He (Jesus) appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.’* Only a Savior without sin can take it away from us. Otherwise it’s the pot calling the kettle black, right?

*Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. (v.7)*

It’s safe to assume that if scripture is warning us to not be lead astray then that’s probably because people are going to try to lead us astray! We’ve got to wise up and pay attention. John’s warnings are simple. Believers should love one another. If they don’t, then something is wrong. Believers should do what is right even when no one is watching. If they don’t, then something is wrong. Believers should not be in a habit of sin. If they are, then something is wrong.

**Do any other verses or phrases within verses 7-10 stand out to you?**

**If you had one take away from today’s passage, what would it be?**

Whatever Satan had accomplished on this earth, Christ came to make another way. Although we still fight against the forces of this world, we have hope in a savior named Jesus Christ. To close out our time together today, take one more look at the verse you wrote just above. Pray and ask the Lord to help you understand it better, to bring it to fulfillment in your life, and to help you teach it to someone close to you. The Lord honors our requests when brought to him with an honest heart. See you tomorrow, sister!

# Love One Another

DEAR CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE WITH  
WORDS OR TONGUE BUT WITH  
ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH.

- 1 JOHN 3:18

**TODAY'S READING** -1 *John 3:11-24*

I'm sort of running out of creative ways to greet you at the beginning of each lesson, so forgive me. But I really just want to come up, squeeze your neck and, as we look at one another we both nod and say simultaneously, 'Let's do this.' Is that too much to ask?

**Take a minute to read our passage for today at least twice. Underlining and taking notes as you go.**

Our day today starts out with a throwback story about Cain. If you'll remember with me, Cain and Abel were Adam and Eve's sons. Two very different kids, apparently. Isn't it crazy how you can have the same parents yet siblings turn out very different? Well, suffice it to say that Cain and Abel took 'different' to the extreme. One had a heart for God and obeyed and the other, well, didn't.

**Take a minute to brush up on the story in Genesis 4:1-16**

So Cain kills Abel. Cain was mad (and hurt) because God approved of Abel's sacrifice of meat and not his vegetable offering. See, this is why meat is good for you! Kidding. Just a little carnivore joke for you. In our passage from John, starting in 1 John 3:11, John is all about loving one another. The following is his monologue on why it's better for other people, but also for ourselves, to love one another.

*So don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.  
And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil  
and his brother's were righteous. (v. 12)*

Without being dramatic, there's a really short line for a parallel about how we tend to kill relationships, or even the hope of a relationship/friendship, when we hold our head a little too high. We dislike when someone seems 'better' than us. It's not fun to look at another person and feel like they've got their life together and we don't. (I'm mainly thinking female relationships right now but it could cross genders.) Bearing in mind that our 'opponent' might be the kindest most humble person, yet we hinder any glimmer of a friendship because of how it makes us feel. We 'murder' the friendship simply because we don't like the feelings that surface when we are around that person. Feelings of inferiority or feeling that maybe we could do a better job at some things. Shame does that. It isolates and steals before we realize it and builds a wall between us and friendships that just might be good for us.

It's easy for us to become cynical and cryptic by rationalizing that this person is probably fake, 'because no one is really that sweet all the time' or 'I can't have a friend like that because I need someone real'. All the while, we don't even have eyes to look beyond our own insecurities to see that this person could be such a dear friend to us. We murder the relationship based on our own insecurities. Sometimes, even before we get to know them well. Perhaps it's a familial relationship with our siblings or parents that we slay simply because we don't like that they know the 'true us'. Or, perhaps they don't...so the issue is the same, just flipped.

The end of verse 14: *'Anyone who does not love remains in death'*.

This is the saddest part of all. When we don't love others, it's really us that suffers. We lose out on really deep friendships simply because we can't get over ourselves. We can't push past differences to see companionship and God's love displayed through people all around us. We are truly the ones that miss out.

**Can you think of a time when this has happened to you? Were you ever able to push past the differences to become friends?**

**What was the outcome?**

**What advice would you give to someone in a similar situation?**

Verse 16 is a memorizer. *'This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.'*

Today, this could be a great sentence to memorize. I would quote it like this to myself: 'This is how I know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for me!' And I would repeat it to myself all day. Repetition with an earnest heart breeds understanding. And understanding brings about compassion. Compassion can be an unstoppable force in our interactions with others, but also for ourselves.

**With that thought in mind, read and write 1 John 3:19-20 below:**

**Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.**

*Romans 12:9*

Action and truth- this is how we first know that we belong to the truth (the action of Christ on the cross and the truth of his spirit given freely). But also- this is how we set our hearts at rest in his presence when they condemn us.

Our hearts will condemn us. I know that's not fluffy and fun to think about, but it's almost weirdly comforting to me. You? I know, through scripture, that my thoughts are sometimes not right. And just because I want something, doesn't mean it's what I need. I don't have to feel condemned for every crazy thought I've ever had, and trust me, I've had a lot. However, I do have to bring those thoughts to the Lord. I must test them against scripture. Trusting our own will and our desire's every whit-and-whim can be like trying to read a map in the dark. Your eyes do adjust after awhile but it's never as clear as it should be. Scripture is the literal and figurative light illuminating the map to show us where to go next.

Do you know why we set our hearts at rest in his presence? *For God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything* (v. 20)

**How does that make you feel? Does it bristle your skin to think that he knows all the desires of your heart or does it comfort you? How does your answer shed light on current circumstances in your life?**

Let's finish today off strong.

**Please reread verses 21-24.**

John is calling us friends again, which I so dearly love! In verse 21, John is reiterating that when our hearts condemn us- shame, fear, disbelief- that we usually don't go to God with those worries. Yet, if we can push back against what we 'want' to do and take those worries directly to God, we can have confidence before God. In life situations where we feel and think things that we know are not right, we should immediately go to the Lord in prayer. Don't give into the desire to hide from him in those times. That's what Adam and Eve did (Genesis 3:8). Seek God that you might find yourself in Him and, as verse 22 says, we will receive anything we ask because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

And if that weren't clear enough, God's command is to (1) believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and (2) to love one another. And this is how we know he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (3:23-24)

I don't know about you, but I really appreciate when things are clearly spelled out for me. The end of Chapter 3 seems to lay out in a succinct format the beauty of a relationship with the Lord. We can come to him with our wayward hearts. There is freedom in his presence. Loving everyone is ingrained into Christianity- no room for hate here. Believe in his son Jesus. We know he loves us because he gave us his Holy Spirit. May we not allow shame to murder our relationships with people here on earth or with our heavenly father.

I pray you are blessed and encouraged today. **Remember: This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.**



## Test the Spirits

YOU, DEAR CHILDREN, ARE FROM GOD  
AND HAVE OVERCOME THEM BECAUSE  
OF THE ONE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER  
THAN THE ONE WHO IS IN THE WORLD.  
- 1 JOHN 4:4

## | TEST THE SPIRITS |

### TODAY'S READING - *1 John 4:1-6*

Remember our talk yesterday? We are there again. Come on in and give me some love. Let's group hug and then set our hearts on what the Lord has for us together today. We've only got 6 verses to walk through together today, so that is a manageable goal!

**Go ahead and take a few minutes to read 1 John 4:1-6 and make some notes as you go along.**

Our verses today talk about 'Testing the Spirits'. Lovely title, don't you think? We are back on the anti-christ subject again. Feel free to reference Day 6 if you need a quick refresher. My family and I live in an older part of town. And for some reason, our street is a magnet for visitors of other faiths to knock on our front door. Pair that with me being an introvert that is home a lot during the day and it makes for some funny scenes. You can usually find me running and hiding in the bathroom so they won't see me or just pretending that no one is home. For the record, I can rival James Bond on the floor roll/hide behind the doorway trick. One day they came while Brad was home, so we answered the door together. We had a long conversation with two nice gentlemen and we honestly agreed on so much. Heaven. God. Purpose in life. The importance of family. But then we got to Jesus. And while my suited visitors recognized Jesus, there was no acknowledgment of the cross or that he had even come to earth yet. Blank stares filled with stammering and adamant arguments for their side of the story. We politely said thank you and closed the door, but the interaction stuck with me.

1 John 4:1-3 is the same story. Lots of spirits. Lots of false prophets. Many people in our world wanting Jesus-ish lives. They want the benefits of Jesus without the acknowledgment of who God is. Helping and serving others. Kindness. Acceptance. Love. Service. These are all Biblical concepts and quite frankly, ones that believers should be the best at in the world, yet it can feel like the false spirits around us are doing it better than we can! That should scare you! It scares me!

**What are your thoughts on this topic? Can you think of examples of worldly influences that mimic what Jesus offers us?**

But here's the difference according to John: *This is how you can recognize the spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. That is the spirit of the anti-christ, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.* (v.2-3)

If there's no acknowledgement of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, it doesn't matter how much they talk about love, truth and freedom, it's not of God. Jesus is pivotal in the entire story of scripture; everything points to Jesus.

**Now God has revealed these things to us by the spirit, since the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.**

*1 Corinthians 2:10*

*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them because of the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.* 1 John 4:4

Here's the thing about 'testing the spirits'. This isn't like testing the waters. This is about walking through life with eyes wide open to the spiritual realm around us. Please don't brush this off as hokey horoscope fodder. This is spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-12) and making sure that we are armored up (Ephesians 6:13-18) and ready for a fight (2 Timothy 4:2). Even if it's only Thursday.

**Verse 5 makes me shudder. Write it below:**

'...and the world listens to them.' The world listens to voices that go against Jesus. I've always heard non-believers having a tough time understanding the obedience and disciplines of our faith and that is what keeps them from trusting God. I think that is certainly part of it, but I also think that it's hard to comprehend a God that loves us. A God that cares for us so deeply that he would send his only son to die on a cross for our sins. THAT is harder to comprehend. Love. It's the love that's the linchpin. The disciplines are a part of every other religion, club or organization. But man, the love of a father, the sacrifice of a son, the incomprehensible forgiveness of sin? Those are things that are hard to grasp. Those are the things that keep us awake at night.

**What are personal 'red flags' for you in your conversations with others?**

**How do you decipher if a 'feeling' about someone's intentions is from you or the Lord?**

There's another story that comes to mind when I think about Jesus 'testing the spirits' and it's in a conversation Jesus has with Peter.

**Read Matthew 16:21-28 and give a brief summary. How was Jesus testing the spirits?**

During his time on earth, Jesus took sacrifice seriously. There was no question in his mind that he would have to suffer and that it would be death on a cross that would atone for the sins of the world. But, while Jesus was clear on the mission, his disciples weren't totally buying it. Peter, out of his love and protection for Christ, was quick to pull him aside and say that Jesus shouldn't have to die that way. That he didn't think the cross was the correct method, basically.

You'd think that Jesus would hug him and tell him that everything was going to be ok, and that it was so sweet how much Peter cared about him. They'd have a moment and then Jesus would kindly tell him that he had to go accomplish his Father's work.

But what does he do instead? *'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me: you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men.'* Peter was the stumbling block! Peter, for crying out loud! He certainly had his moments but he was in the in-crowd and yet he had an anti-christ spirit. And Jesus called it out in 2 seconds flat and spoke against Satan!

Listen, sister, maintaining relationship and open communication with the Father keeps us focused and prevents this spirit of doubt from creeping in. We have to fight for authenticity in Jesus' name. He will freely give it!

**Father, I pray for my friend reading this today. She's searching and asking and needing you. Please meet her! Comfort her! Bring her into yourself that she might know what love and peace with her spiritual Father is. You're so good to us. We honor you with our lives that we might be able to know what is of you and what's not, so that we can follow your voice. You lead and we will follow. Amen.**

## God's Love & Ours

THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE.  
BUT PERFECT LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR...  
- 1 JOHN 4:18

**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 4:7-21**

Brad and I met when I was a junior at college in Birmingham, AL. He's a couple of years older than me so he was already working as a college pastor. Fun story- I joined him in ministry after we got married and we did college and high school ministry for awhile at a local church! Anyway, back to the story of when we met. Let's just say that it was not love at first sight. In fact, the first night we met he forgot my name 3 times! So funny to remember back on those details! Anyway, my point is this- he would tell you that he knew I was 'the one' within a few weeks. It took me a tiny bit longer. \*grin\* He told me that he loved me for the first time in my parent's garage, right before I was heading back to school. And do you know what I said? 'Thank you.'

Thank you!? I've been more expressive to the barista at Starbucks! Thank you!? Geez.

We obviously talked after that but it took me a few more weeks to be able to say it to him on my own. We can laugh about it now but it was so not funny then! Love is a simple concept with complicated application. This leads us to our reading for today. (See what I did there?)

**Go ahead and read 1 John 4:7-21.**

Let's not waste any time today.

**Tell me, what is love to you?**

Simple question, right? Well, maybe not. If you're like me, you start the peppering of questions about the type of love, does the other person love me back, and is there such a thing as true love, and so on and so on. The book of John is not a romantic comedy- far from it- but in his letters he does talk about love. A LOT. In 15 verses it's mentioned more than 20 times! I'm not the smartest person but I'm thinking maybe John feels like understanding love is important?

**Let's start in verses 7 & 8. Read and write down anything that sticks out to you.**

As mentioned above...this text is centered around love. God's love. In fact, this passage may be one of the most powerful portions of scripture concerning the love of God. The word for this type of love is agape, which means a self-giving love that seeks the best interest of its object and is not selfish or self-seeking.

Agape in its root-word means 'wide-open'. Meaning it's a type of love for everyone. A love for humanity, if you will. The other three types of love are: Storge is a familial love. Eros is a romantic type of love. Philia is the reciprocal quality of love you feel for a friend.

So this agape love that John writes about is the only type of love that doesn't have a directional quality to it. The other 3 types of love have a one-to-one quality; spouse, friend, parent, etc. Agape love is a love that comes from within the Holy Spirit inside of us and radiates outward in all directions.

**Write verse 9 below:**

This is how God loves the world. Not just a few people. Not only a certain type of people. All. Every. All-encompassing.

*And this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us  
and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10*

He loved first. No matter how long you've been walking with the Lord I pray those words wash over you afresh today. He loved you first. In all your sin. In all your propensity to sin. Even though you did this or that and thought about those things. He loved you first and sought you out with a purpose. Love was his purpose.

**Verses 11 & 12 sum things up nicely, don't they?**

Remember how we talked about 'joy made complete' on Day 1? Similar concept. We have a relationship with Jesus and feel his love and joy made complete in us first, and then we go out and share it! We learn first and then we teach. We find food first so that we can then help others eat. 1 John 4:13-14 continues and solidifies this position. In verse 14, he says, '*we have seen and testify...*'. We must see first and then we can testify!

**Please write verse 17 below:**

*We can have confidence in the day of judgement because, in this world, we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. (vv.17-18)*

Perfect love drives out fear. Our one and only version of perfect love is with God. Your spouse will fail you, your kids will fail you, and goodness knows, eventually we all will fail! Your circumstances will never make you complete. That job, no matter how good it is, will not fully satisfy in the long run. If you've ever felt like you're drowning in the day-to-day, then you know that your circumstances won't keep you afloat for very long. Yet, we keep grasping at these things as if they are life saving flotation devices, and all the while the shore is just up ahead. The shore of Christ is where we can take off pride, selfish desires and sin, so that in turn we experience peace, forgiveness and new life. Temporary relief in the ocean of life that's full of crashing waves will never work.

**As we finish today, read our last 3 verses and tell me your thoughts:**

Ask the Lord any questions you might have about the passage we read today. Our God is not afraid of questions...don't believe that for one minute. Questions engage our mind and our heart. For many of us it's how we learn what we are studying. I can promise you that God can handle any and all of your questions when asked with a humble heart. He's a safe place to land because he is love. And he won't say ridiculous things like 'thank you!' when you tell him that you love him.

Love you today, sister. Fight for the love of God to infiltrate every square inch of your life. You'll never be the same.

**In him, and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.**  
*Ephesians 3:12*



# *Faith in the son of God*

THIS IS HOW WE KNOW THAT WE LOVE  
THE CHILDREN OF GOD: BY LOVING GOD  
AND CARRYING OUT HIS COMMANDS.

- 1 JOHN 5:2

**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 5:1-12**

Hello to you! I just finished working out and doing some stretches so I could be loosened up for today's lesson. Kidding. I just ate two Oreos. And let's be honest, I'm thinking about a third. The real question is whether I'll pour a glass of milk. But I digress.

**Go ahead and read our passage for today.**

Our scripture work for today can be categorized into two parts. We'll start with **Part 1: 1 John 5:1-5**. Our first few verses are solely focusing on the results of faith. Take a minute and jot a few results of faith down:

**Our banner verse for today is simple, succinct and gut wrenching. Please write it below:**

Just after John makes his point about the children of God carrying out his commands, he's quick to move into his next point which is to make sure the community of recipients of this letter know that God's commands are not burdensome. In fact, God's commands are what bring about victory in this world! If carrying out his commands feels overwhelming to you, be encouraged by these words from William Barclay's Daily Bible Study, "God does not give us his commandments and then go away and leave us to ourselves. He is there by our side to enable us to carry out what he has commanded. What is impossible for us becomes possible with God." It's always comforting to be reminded we're not in it alone!

This concept might bring to mind another passage - **Matthew 11:28-30**

Anyone who is weary and burdened. (Isn't that everyone?) You give those people rest? (Where's the sign up sheet exactly? Asking for a friend.)

It's easy for us to get on board with a love language like the one written about in the Matthew passage, as well as in today's scripture in chapter 5. Who wouldn't want to 'overcome the world?' I don't know about you but I'd settle for overcoming my emotions on some days, but the world sounds good, too.

The three main concepts for part 1 are this: *Obedience, faith and love.*

**Write those three words below. I want you to see them in your own handwriting.**

We give evidence to our belief that Jesus is God's promised Messiah by obeying God's commands. Such obedience is what helps us to overcome the thousands of temptations the world offers us every single day. When we have genuine faith in God, we fully trust in his direction and who he is. Our motivation for obedience is our love for God. What other proof of our love for him is there, other than obedience? That love then extends to all other children of God.

*Obedience. Faith. Love.*

Those three concepts lead us to **Part 2. - 1 John 5:6-12 -**

We have three more words for Part 2. *Water. Spirit. Blood.*

**Write those below so that you can also see them in your own handwriting.**

In verse 6, John writes about how Jesus didn't just come by water but by water and blood. Here, he is referring to Jesus' baptism, as well as his crucifixion. And the Spirit is what testifies because the spirit is truth.

There are 3 'witnesses' to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah- the Son of God.

Here's the breakdown of the witnesses:

*Water* - The water at Jesus' Baptism was a key part of that ritual. It spoke to God being the living water as well as God's words to Jesus at the time of the baptism. Read those here: Matthew 3:13-17

*Spirit* - The spirit is what came upon Jesus during his baptism. This side of the cross, we receive all of God and the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation but in Jesus' time, it wasn't so. During baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit that stayed with him for the next 3 years of ministry.

*Blood* - The blood is represented by the cross and Jesus' resurrection. Colossians tells us that Jesus Christ made peace through the blood.

**And I will ask  
the Father, and  
he will give you  
another coun-  
selor to be with  
you Forever- the  
spirit of truth.**

*John 14:16*

Out of context, this can all sound, well, weird. I get it. It's a big concept but I think the most important part to remember is that we have 3 main witnesses that speak of the personhood and glory of Jesus and we have 3 main results of faith above.

*Obedience* → *Water*  
*Faith* → *Spirit*  
*Love* → *Blood*

Can you see the correlations? Out of Obedience, Jesus was baptized. Seemed futile since he was God's son. But it was an act of Obedience so that out of Faith, the Spirit could come and rest on him for his 3 years of ministry. And it was only out of his Love for God and for us that he went on to shed his Blood on the cross and to rise again three days later that he might be seated with God in heaven.

*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life,  
and in this life is his Son.' 1 John 5:11*

The witnesses above bear testimony that God has given us eternal life, and in this life is his Son. As you go about your day today, I pray you'll keep those 6 words in the forefront of your thoughts. Maybe even write them on an index card or something?

*Obedience, Love, Faith, Water, Spirit and Blood.*

**Father, sometimes scripture can be hard to understand. Please give us your heart and wisdom on your word. You know it best and our hearts are hungry for you. You were so gracious to us to send your Son to accomplish your commands here on earth. May we be as obedient, faithful and loving as he was. We love you, Amen.**

## *A Confident Conclusion*

HIS IS THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN  
APPROACHING GOD: THAT IF WE  
ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS  
WILL, HE HEARS US.

- 1 JOHN 5:14

**TODAY'S READING - 1 John 5:13-21**

Hi friend. Proud of you for hanging in for the final days of our study. Our time is never wasted in scripture. Some days we have huge breakthroughs and others we simply till the soil so that we might plant the seeds and keep them healthy and safe. I pray you've experienced both types of days in this journey through the Epistles of John. Today is our last day in 1 John and the last two days will be the subsequent books in The Trio. Let's finish strong and power through John's concluding remarks:

**As always, be sure you've read through the passage a couple of times. Take a minute to ask the Lord to open your mind and heart to his word.**

As John brings this first letter to a close, remember that our text is just that- a letter to a community of friends to stay strong and firm in the Lord. A diatribe against false teachers who seek out weak members of the church, a plea to remember the truth that Jesus left with them and a call to keep our gaze forward and upward on the finished work of Christ and on heaven to come! I couldn't encourage you with better words than verses 13-15, so I'll wait here while you digest those again.

Verse 14 is our banner verse for today, but it could be a banner verse for life. No matter what happens, no matter who schemes against us or who fails us.... we have a God that hears us! And not just barely hears us, as if he's only being polite, while never truly listening to us. We have confidence that he turns his attention to his children, cups our faces in his hands and LISTENS to us when we ask things in accordance to his will.

Don't move past this quickly or gloss over it because you're in a hurry. These verses are scriptures you commit to memory. Even if you don't need them today, you will need them at some point. That's the beauty of how memorization works- it's a packing away so that it's there when you need it. Foresight to know the future is unclear but rest assured, God is unchanging.

*If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.*

1 John 5:16-17

The scripture above has had theologians scratching their heads for centuries. I won't pretend to understand it, but the common and agreed upon meaning be-

hind ‘*sin that does not lead to death*’ is this. There are sins that threaten our spiritual lives and sins that threaten our physical lives. You could argue that there is much crossover in these two areas however, there are most certainly sins in my day to day life that don’t threaten to take my physical life. I’m guessing you’re the same way. At the end of the day, sin is a thief and a liar. It promises to give when really it takes. It seduces to give the illusion of power, popularity and knownness when really all it does is isolate and confiscate your voice.

**Read and write any part of Romans 6:20-23 that stands out below:**

1 John 5:18-20 bring things home for us. John is landing the plane on this lengthy letter to his church body. Remember when we talked about how John wasn’t afraid to say what he needed to say? Well, he’s back at it again.

**Take a minute to write out a few statements that sum up what John ‘knows for sure’.**

1 -

2 -

3 -

4 -

I’ve given you space for 4 theological declarations. I counted around 10, so feel free to go for those extra credit points! These declarations are the bow on top of the present that is 1 John. It’s his moment to hurry back and cover the concepts that he desperately wants to make sure that his people know before he places his quill in the ink for a rest. There’s a stark desperation to it that is surprisingly inspiring.

**What would be your final declarations to the ones you love? List a few below:**

A buzz word or phrase these days is to know ‘your truth’. Live your truth! Speak

your truth! Build your life around your truth! Hopefully, after nearly two weeks together, you know what I'm about to say. Sister, you are beautiful and you have a story. No doubt a blockbuster of a story. But the only truth we have to stand on is scripture and the truth that God loves us, sent his son to die for us and to be raised again three days later to transcend into heaven so that he might be seated at the right hand of the Father.

**Simply let your  
'yes' be 'yes' and  
your 'no' be 'no'.  
*Matthew 5:37***

***That's the truth.***

Personal revelation is a good thing. It can be what steers us away from poor choices and helps us know our hearts better. However, don't buy into the world's version of self-trust. You can trust God, our Father. He leads, guides and protects us out of his love and deep affection for us.

The last verse of the book of 1 John is this: *'Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.'* (v. 21) This statement is the perfect summation to what we've been discussing. That there are declarations of our faith and yet, the world has us constantly bombarded with declarations of self-sufficiency. John ends with a plea to essentially, *'Be wary of any teachings that are opposed to these realities.'* He knew that the world, even centuries ago, would be vying for our affection. It's his last ditch effort to remind us to not bow to the idol of self.

**Things to pray for today:**

- **The ability to see the goodness of the Lord, not just rules to obey.**
- **A fresh desire to learn and study his word.**
- **A heart that trusts the truth of scripture.**
- **A renewed desire to remove the idol of self from your life.**
- **A quickening in your soul of the fact that God loves and desires a personal relationship with you.**



## *Commandment to Love*

AND NOW, DEAR LADY, I AM NOT  
WRITING YOU A NEW COMMAND, BUT  
ONE WE HAVE HAD FROM THE BEGINNING.  
I ASK THAT WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.  
- 2 JOHN 5

**TODAY'S READING - 2 John**

Today we are going to cover an entire book of the Bible! Don't be scared! It's gonna be great! Truth be told, it's only 13 verses, so it should be enlightening and not overwhelming.

**Let's start by reading the entire book and taking notes.**

First of all, let's talk through the details of this letter.

**Author: *John*** (He's the Elder) - This term may refer to his age or official position in the church. John was the last apostle to accompany Jesus on earth. As to his church position, he was most surely an overseer or bishop. Don't let the terms confuse you. Just know it's the same John we've been reading.

**Recipient: *'The chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.'*** There are two main schools of thought on this mysterious 'chosen lady'. #1- The lady is the church, elsewhere referred to as the bride of Christ or even a particular local church. #2- Others think that the letter could be addressed to 'The elect Kyrria'. This name could be the Greek equivalent to the Arameic name of Martha and both mean 'lady'.

**What do you think? Now that you've read the entire letter, what is your summation of who the 'chosen lady' is and why?**

**Verse 3 should be a familiar greeting for any of you Paul lovers. Except there's an added noun in there. Write the three words below.**

**I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned.**

*Romans 16:17*

I think it's really interesting that John adds in 'mercy'. He's so fixated on the personhood of Christ that mercy is a standard concept for Christianity in his mind. There is grace and peace, but oh, there is the beauty of mercy, too!

In verse 4 we see John resume his customary cadence focusing on love and truth. He's so pleased that members of the church have remained in the truth. He reminds the chosen lady that he's not saying anything new, yet he's still preaching his banner theology. God is love and therefore we must love one another (v.5).

The next few verses reemphasize his message in 1 John. There's lots of crazy people in the world saying the name of God. Be sure that their theology is centered on Christ and not just a 'god' that they send prayers. The world's 3 main religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity all use the term 'god' or God. But only Christianity reveres God in 3 persons. Jesus cannot be left out of the equation. Period. John is adamant about that!

Verse 10 could be off putting if we forget the background of our book. John warns this community against welcoming in people who do not agree with this view of Jesus Christ. He is essentially saying that if we entertain or show hospitality to these people then we are wicked also. But here's why I said to remember our background and a great example of why we cannot take scripture out of context.

John is speaking against these 'traveling missionaries'. They are random people and in ancient days there was no way to check their backgrounds or authenticity. These traveling teachers had likely left a Christian church and adopted some of the Gnostic beliefs along their travels. Think of it like a buffet of religion all mixed together. John's point was not to be unwelcoming to those who believe different than we do. Jesus was clear about his stance on that in these passages. Read and write a one sentence summary below:

**Mark 2:1-12 -**

**Luke 5:27-32 -**

**Matthew 12:1-14 -**

John's point was that when people worm their false teaching into our lives, we are susceptible to believing things we know are not true simply because we've gotten used to hearing it. It's similar to how your parents probably told you to be careful who your friends were in high school and college....we become who we hang around. That's John's position.

Lastly, we see our sweet and endearing author close with what is a timely message for our technology filled lives.

*I have so much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. 2 John 12*

There's a lot we can say over text, email and facebook. There's much to be written in books about the goodness of the Lord. But there is magic in the face to face. My dad calls it 'eyeball to eyeball'. Things change. Hard lines in the sand soften and become easily crossable. Walls of protection are lowered and vulnerability takes center stage when we take the time to meet with people face to face.

I am praying for you today, sister. That you would remember the command to love one another. This will most certainly come on a day when you want to do anything but love someone else! That's the irony of this life. But also that you'd be able to meet someone face to face today- even if it's the cashier at the grocery store. Make eye contact. Encourage. Reach across social boundaries that you might offer hope for today and a friendship that might just be the very thing that keeps that person going for one more day.

In the name of Jesus, may your joy be made complete in him and others today.

# *Faithfulness to the Gospel*

I HAVE NO GREATER JOY THAN TO HEAR THAT  
MY CHILDREN ARE WALKING IN THE TRUTH.  
- 3 JOHN 4

**TODAY'S READING - 3 John**

This is our last day! You did it! I'm just beaming with joy over here! So proud of you! I pray that this discipline of committing to something and completing the task will spill over into other areas of your life!

3 John is the shortest book in the New Testament. Our 13 verses for today will echo much of 1 & 2 John however, where there was a firmness to 2 John, there is a beautiful tenderness to the message of 3 John. Sometimes we need it told to us straight and other times we need more of a gentle nudge toward the truth. All three of these books have the opportunity to meet you wherever you are in life. Isn't scripture just the most beautiful thing?

Our author is the same: still John, however our recipient has changed.

**Recipient: *Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*** - Gaius is mentioned in two other scriptures, and although we are not 100% sure if this is the same person, it's widely agreed upon that it is.

**Write the two scriptures below.**

**Romans 16:23 -**

**Acts 20:4 -**

We have three people that are discussed in this book.

**Gaius:** The hospitable and the spiritual.

**Demetrius:** The commendable.

**Diotrephes:** The self-seeking and unloving.

MacDonald tells us that Diotrephes may illustrate the strong, self-willed personality that can show up in any church structure. Yikes! I've known a person or two like that in my day, have you?

Let's take a minute to pray for that person. Whether they are in your past or present, the fact that they came to mind at the mention of a personality type

**They have told  
the church about  
your love...**  
*3 John 6*

means that they are a part of your church story. Church resentment sadly is easily bred. Confessing and praying for others is a front line defense against a spirit of offense.

The primary goal of this epistle is that of hospitality. How we welcome people into our church bodies says so much about what we believe about Jesus. The beginning of the letter is John praising Gaius on his faithfulness and how his church community is continuing to walk in the truth. Our banner verse speaks to this concept. We can apply this a little more literally, if we so choose....as believers, isn't that what we desire for our own children as well? To walk in the truth? We must teach them well- and it's never too late to start!

Verses 5-8 continue with John's encouragement to Gaius. He apparently worked with others to be hospitable and received no help from anyone else. However we 'show hospitality so that we might work together for the truth'. Friendliness, warmth and affability goes a long way in winning people over. Believers are to be winsome and appealing to the world. One of the easiest ways to accomplish this is through the simple act of being kind. No news there, but it's easily glossed over. Common kindness and respect is often what softens hearts.

**Verse 9 is a gut check for me. Please write it below:**

Diotrephes '*loves to be first*'. Whew. I don't know why that's so powerful to me. This has nothing to do with being treated fairly or being welcomed. It has to do with a church member who had to be first to share news or always be the one on the platform. Diotrephes was that kind of a leader in the church. Full of pride and ambition. Wanting to be the gatekeeper of the church and call all the shots.. But his pride would lead him to destruction. In other religions, there is a process by which one talks to God that involves a hierarchy in the church. One of the most beautiful things about Christianity is that we can go straight to God. And he hears us!

Apparently Diotrephes is on a rampage of malicious gossip and, if that weren't enough, he's asking people to leave the church. Don't miss the fact that the first description of this man 'was that he had to be first.' It then morphed into malicious gossip and finally culminated with throwing people out of church.

Moral of the Diotrephes story? It starts in our hearts. Evil breeds and multiplies in our hearts long before you can see it on the outside. It then pollinates and starts to come out of mouths with hushed whispers and gossip. Before we know it that pride has overtaken our bodies and leads to physical actions. All repercussions of pride and an inflated ego. Be wary of those who puff you up. John's not letting this happen on his watch. '*I will call attention to what he is doing...*' (v.10).

John. He's the real deal. He gives praise and encouragement where it's due and gives warning and calls out danger when it's lurking behind the veil of religion. We'd be wise to do the same.

*'Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.'* (v.11). Sounds easy enough, right? Demetrius certainly has the hang of it. He's *'well-spoken of by everyone'* and also by John. There is a small but important lesson here. We cannot feed off 'haters'. Yes, there is resistance to truth. And while it can be a sign we are not on the right track, it can also be a sign that we could stand to soften our delivery a little bit. Notice I did not say to soften our message....but the delivery. Grace, mercy and peace. Remember those from yesterday? That's our delivery. Our message is God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Have you ever experienced this in a relationship? You might have been right but the way you said it wasn't appropriate? What did you learn from that experience?**

John's last two thoughts are this: I can't wait to see you face to face- remember that from yesterday?

And then at the end, he sends peace to them and asks Gaius to *'greet the friends there by name.'* I feel like this is another one of those tiny lessons that could easily be overlooked.

The respect of remembering names is so valuable. I fail at this quite often but I want to get better at it. My opinion of someone soars when they simply remember my name. To me, it can feel like they remembered me and our time together wasn't wasted. Of course, everyone makes mistakes but man, it's a winsome thing to acknowledge and remember people by their names. Let's try together to value that action!

Last thing I want you to know....

Jesus loves you and knows you by name. He truly does. No matter what you're going through today, he's with you. Walk with him. Engage with him. Tell him how you feel. How you really feel. How happy you are or how lonely you feel. If John has taught us anything, it's that the life and crucifixion of Jesus really happened and that we, too, can have a relationship with a living and active God. That's a message that spans centuries and countless stories of God's grace.

***Peace to you, friend. And also grace and mercy, as well.***



