

Comprehensive Study Guide for 1 John (KJV)

Introduction: Background, Authorship, Audience, and Purpose

The Apostle John: Authorship and Background

The book of 1 John is traditionally attributed to **John the Apostle**, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus and often referred to as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” Early church tradition, dating back to the second century, firmly associates John with the authorship of this epistle, as well as the Gospel of John and Revelation. Scholars point to strong internal evidence: the distinctive style, vocabulary, and theological themes (light and darkness, love and hate, truth and falsehood) that echo the Gospel of John and the other Johannine letters. John's direct, eyewitness testimony is evident in the prologue (1 John 1:1-4), where he insists, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes... our hands have handled, of the Word of life.” This authority is underlined by the fact that John was not only a companion of Jesus but also intimately involved in the foundation and ongoing life of the early Christian community.

Church fathers such as Polycarp (a direct disciple of John), Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian unanimously ascribed the letter to the Apostle John. The letter's anonymous nature likely reflects John's deep personal connection with his readers; he did not need to identify himself.

Intended Audience and Historical Context

The epistle does not specify a recipient by name. However, the **internal evidence** and testimony from early church history suggest that John wrote primarily to Christian believers in Asia Minor, especially around Ephesus, where he spent his later years. These communities comprised both Jews and Gentiles, and by the late first century (circa AD 85–95), the Christian movement had begun to solidify its distinct identity amidst competing philosophies, heresies, and social tensions.

John addresses his readers as “little children,” “beloved,” and “brethren,” indicating his role as a spiritual father or elder. He assumes his audience are true born-again Christians—those who have received the gospel, experienced the Holy Spirit, and are facing not only external persecution but also internal strife, particularly from certain former members who have adopted and spread false teachings.

Purpose and Major Themes

The **primary purposes** of 1 John are to:

- Combat false teachings (proto-Gnosticism and Docetism) that denied Christ's real humanity and undermined apostolic doctrine.
- Assure believers of their salvation and the reality of eternal life in Christ.

- Define the true Christian life as one characterized by love, obedience, righteousness, and fellowship with God.

Key themes that run throughout the epistle include:

- The person of Jesus Christ: fully God and fully man (high Christology).
- The nature of God: “God is light” and “God is love.”
- The concept of being “children of God”: spiritual rebirth and adoption (redeemed, saved).
- The reality of sin, confession, and forgiveness through Christ’s atonement.
- Christian love: the practical outworking of faith and the evidence of genuine spiritual life.
- Discernment: warnings against antichrists and testing the spirits.

Structural Outline and Section Divisions

Below is a structured outline of 1 John, with each section titled to reflect its main subject. Each is accompanied by brief commentary, relevant cross-references, and highlighted elements regarding Christology and the identity of the Christian as a “child of God.”

- **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the nature, person, and work of Jesus Christ.

The Full Text of 1 John (KJV), Divided with Subject Titles, Commentary, and Cross-References

Note: Some longer sections are subdivided for clarity and depth.

1. The Prologue: The Word of Life Manifested (1 John 1:1-4)

Text

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; **2** (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) **3** That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Brief Commentary

The letter opens by echoing the language of the Gospel of John (“In the beginning was the Word...”), stressing the eternal preexistence and divine nature of Christ, here called the “Word of life.” John insists on the **sensory reality** of the incarnation: he and the other apostles heard, saw, and even touched Jesus—refuting early forms of Gnostic teaching that denied the full humanity of Christ. The purpose is to bring the readers into fellowship (koinonia) with

both the apostolic witnesses and with God the Father and His Son. Such fellowship is the source of true and complete Christian joy, grounded in the reality of Christ's person and work.

Cross-References

- John 1:1, 14 ("the Word was with God... the Word became flesh")
- Luke 24:39 (the reality of Christ's resurrected body)
- John 17:3 ("this is life eternal...")
- Acts 4:20 (apostolic testimony)
- Philippians 2:6-7 (Christ's incarnation)

Highlight

Christology: Jesus is described as the "Word of life" and "that eternal life... with the Father."

Child of God: The invitation to fellowship prefigures the later development of being children of God.

2. God Is Light: Walking in the Light and Confession of Sin (1 John 1:5-2:2)

Text

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Brief Commentary

John presents a striking **metaphor for God's nature**: God is "light," representing His absolute holiness, truth, and moral purity. Those who have true fellowship with God must also "walk in the light," living in honest repentance, obedience, and love. Far from achieving perfection, believers are expected to confess their sins and rely on the atoning blood of Jesus Christ for continual cleansing. John emphasizes the ongoing intercessory role of Christ as **Advocate** (parakletos) and **Propitiation** (atoning sacrifice) for sins. Denial of personal sin is a lie, but confession brings God's faithful forgiveness.

Cross-References

- John 8:12 ("I am the light of the world")
- Psalm 51:7 (cleansing from sin)
- Hebrews 4:14-16 (Christ as high priest/advocate)
- Romans 3:23-25 (propitiation through Christ)
- Isaiah 1:18 (forgiveness and cleansing)
- Proverbs 28:13 (confession brings mercy)
- 1 Peter 1:15-16 (call to holiness)

Highlight

Christology: Jesus is "the righteous," "the propitiation for our sins," and "advocate with the Father."

Child of God: The use of "my little children" signals spiritual relationship; assurance of forgiveness is a mark of being God's children.

3. The Test of Obedience: Knowing God and Keeping His Commandments (1 John 2:3-6)

Text

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **5** But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. **6** He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Brief Commentary

True knowledge of God is evidenced by an obedient life. Profession without practice is self-deception. Love and obedience are inseparable; the love of God is "perfected" (made mature or complete) in those who keep His word. To "abide in Him" is to imitate Christ's example—a recurring Johannine theme.

Cross-References

- Matthew 7:21-23 ("Not everyone... but he who does the will...")
- John 14:15 ("If you love me, keep my commandments.")
- James 2:14-26 (faith without works is dead)
- John 15:10 ("abide in my love... if you keep my commandments...")

Highlight

Christology: Jesus' example provides the pattern for Christian living.

Child of God: Obedience is the family resemblance of God's children.

4. The Old and New Commandment: The Test of Love (1 John 2:7-11)

Text

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. **8** Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. **9** He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. **10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. **11** But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Brief Commentary

The command to love is both ancient (from Leviticus 19:18, and Jesus' teaching) and ever-new, realized in a fresh way through Christ's life and the indwelling Spirit. Love for fellow believers is the essential proof that one is truly "in the light"; hatred signals residency in darkness and spiritual blindness.

Cross-References

- Leviticus 19:18 ("Love your neighbor as yourself")
- John 13:34-35 (the "new commandment" of love)
- 1 Corinthians 13 (the primacy of love)
- Romans 13:8-10 (love fulfills the law)
- Matthew 22:37-40 (the great commandment)
- John 15:12-13 (love as Christ loved)
- 1 John 4:20-21 (on loving God/neighbor)

Highlight

Christology: The commandment is made "new" and "true" in Christ (v.8).

Child of God: Love for the brethren is a defining mark of God's family.

5. Spiritual Growth: Children, Fathers, and Young Men (1 John 2:12-14)

Text

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. **13** I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. **14** I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Brief Commentary

John addresses the congregation at various stages of spiritual maturity, affirming the reality of their experience: forgiveness, knowledge of God, and overcoming Satan. Each description underscores growth as God's children and the diverse gifts in the body of Christ.

Cross-References

- Ephesians 2:1-10 (spiritual transformation)
- Colossians 2:6-7 (spiritual rooting and growth)
- 2 Peter 3:18 (grow in grace and knowledge)
- 1 John 5:18 (overcoming the evil one)

Highlight

Child of God: The repeated “little children” and “ye have known the Father” stress spiritual birth and growth as God's offspring.

6. Loving Not the World: Separation and Loyalty to God (1 John 2:15-17)

Text

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. **17** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Brief Commentary

John warns against divided loyalties: love for “the world” (meaning the fallen, value system opposed to God) is incompatible with love for God. He identifies the triad of flesh, eyes, and pride—a summary of sinful temptation. Eternal life is reserved for those who do God's will.

Cross-References

- Matthew 6:24 ("no one can serve two masters")
- James 4:4 (friendship with the world)
- Romans 12:2 (not conformed to this world)
- Galatians 5:16-17 (lust of the flesh)
- 1 Peter 1:24-25 (transience of worldly things)

Highlight

Child of God: True children are defined by their love and loyalty to the Father, not to the values of the world.

7. Warning Against Antichrists and Deceivers (1 John 2:18-27)

Text

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. **19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. **20** But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. **21** I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. **22** Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. **23** Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. **24** Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. **25** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. **26** These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. **27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Brief Commentary

The growing threat of false teaching is personified by the term "antichrist"—anyone denying Jesus is the Christ, and thus denying both Son and Father. True believers remain steadfast, and the "anointing" (indwelling Holy Spirit) enables spiritual discernment. Separation from fellowship reveals the reality of apostasy.

Cross-References

- Matthew 24:5, 24 (false christs)
- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 (apostasy in the last days)
 - **Apostasy** refers to the act of abandoning or renouncing one's faith, beliefs, or religious affiliation. In the context of 1 John 2:18-27, apostasy is illustrated by those who "went out from us, but they were not of us," meaning individuals who once appeared to belong to the community of believers but ultimately rejected essential truths about Jesus Christ and separated themselves from the fellowship. This departure reveals a lack of genuine faith and serves as a warning against the dangers of false teaching and spiritual deception.
- John 14:26 (the Holy Spirit will teach you all things)
- Galatians 1:6-9 (no other gospel)
- John 16:13 (Spirit guides into truth)

Highlight

Christology: Centrality of confession that "Jesus is the Christ," denial is "antichrist."

Child of God: Security comes from the "anointing" abiding in believers.

8. Abiding in Christ and the Hope of His Coming (1 John 2:28–3:3)

Text

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. **29** If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. **3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Brief Commentary

John highlights the certainty and privilege of being called **children of God**—an identity conferred by God's love, not by human achievement. The future hope of Christ's return brings both present assurance and motivation for personal purity, as believers anticipate being transformed to be like Him. True spiritual life reveals itself through righteousness.

Cross-References

- John 1:12 ("to as many as received him... sons of God")
- Romans 8:14-17 (adoption as sons)

- Philippians 3:20-21 (transformation at Christ's coming)
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 (beholding, being changed)
- 1 Peter 1:13-16 (holiness in hope)
- Colossians 3:4 (being revealed in glory with Him)

Highlight

Child of God: “Behold what manner of love... called sons/children of God”; new birth is underscored. **Christology:** The promise of transformation (“we shall be like him”) centers on Jesus’ future appearing.

9. Sin and Righteousness: Children of God and Children of the Devil (1 John 3:4-10)

Text

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. **5** And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **6** Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. **7** Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Brief Commentary

A sharp contrast is drawn between children of God and children of the devil. The mark of God’s children is not sinless perfection, but a break with habitual, persistent sin as a settled life pattern. Christ’s incarnation aimed to “take away our sins” and “destroy the works of the devil.” God’s “seed” (supernatural life) abides in born-again believers, giving practical evidence—righteousness and love.

Cross-References

- John 8:44 (children of the devil)
- Romans 6:18-22 (free from sin, slaves of righteousness)
- Matthew 7:16-20 (by their fruits you will know them)
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 (new creation)
- 1 Peter 1:23 (born again... by the word of God)
- Hebrews 2:14-15 (Christ destroys the power of the devil)

Highlight

Child of God: "Born of God"; true identity is proven by righteous living and love. **Christology:** "He was manifested to take away our sins... destroy the works of the devil."

10. Love in Action: The True Mark of Christians (1 John 3:11-24)

Text

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. **12** Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. **13** Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. **14** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. **15** Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. **16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17** But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? **18** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. **19** And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. **20** For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. **21** Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. **22** And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. **23** And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. **24** And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Brief Commentary

The divine command to love one another is presented as foundational, exemplified in the contrast between Cain (hatred) and Christ (sacrificial love). True Christian love goes beyond words to practical deeds. Such self-giving love is proof of new birth and abiding in Christ. Assurance of salvation flows from obedience and is confirmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Cross-References

- Genesis 4:3-16 (Cain and Abel)
- John 13:34-35 (love by which disciples are recognized)
- Romans 5:5-8 (God's love poured out and demonstrated)
- Matthew 5:21-22 (hatred as murder in the heart)
- James 2:14-17 (faith expressed by works)

- Romans 8:16 (Spirit bears witness with our spirit)

Highlight

Christology: "He laid down his life for us" is the supreme model.

Child of God: Evidence of being God's children = love for the brethren, boldness before God, and answered prayer.

11. Testing the Spirits: Discernment of True and False Teaching (1 John 4:1-6)

Text

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. **4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. **5** They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. **6** We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Brief Commentary

Discernment is vital in the face of spiritual deception. The doctrinal test is simple yet profound: affirmation of the full reality of Christ's incarnation. Denial of this truth is labeled "antichrist." The children of God are enabled, by the indwelling Spirit, to overcome error and hold fast to apostolic truth.

Cross-References

- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (false apostles)
- Matthew 7:15 (beware of false prophets)
- 1 Timothy 4:1 (deceitful spirits)
- John 16:13 (Spirit guides into all truth)
- Romans 8:9-11 (the Spirit vs. the flesh)

Highlight

Christology: Affirmation of Jesus Christ "come in the flesh" is the litmus test of truth. **Child of God:** Those "of God" possess spiritual discernment and victory.

12. God Is Love: The Source and Outflow of Christian Love (1 John 4:7-21)

Text

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. **8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. **9** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. **10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. **12** No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. **13** Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. **15** Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. **16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. **17** Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. **19** We love him, because he first loved us. **20** If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? **21** And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Brief Commentary

The source of genuine love is God Himself; indeed, "God is love." Christian love is grounded in the prior, initiating love of God shown in sending Christ as "the propitiation for our sins." Confession of the Son, the experience of the Spirit, and the practice of love all combine as evidence that God dwells in us and we in Him. This love provides boldness, eliminates fear of judgment, and manifests itself in concrete relationships. Claims to love God are exposed as empty if not accompanied by love for others.

Cross-References

- John 3:16 (God so loved the world...)
- Romans 5:8 (God's love demonstrated in Christ's death)
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (the nature of love)
- John 14:23 (God dwells with those who love and obey)
- Romans 8:15 (Spirit of adoption, casting out fear)
- Matthew 25:40 (love for Christ shown in practical help for others)

Highlight

Christology: The Father sent the Son to be the "Saviour of the world," "propitiation," and "Son of God."

Child of God: Love for others is the evidence of regeneration.

II John: Truth, Love, and Discernment

The book of 2 John was written by the apostle John to ***“the elect lady and her children,”*** who likely represent a local church and its members. John's purpose was to encourage them to walk in truth and love while warning them against deceivers who deny the true doctrine of Christ. As we read and study this brief letter, we gain valuable insight into the importance of holding fast to the teachings of Christ, practicing genuine love among believers, and exercising discernment to guard against false teachings. This message remains relevant, reminding us that truth and love are inseparable foundations for faithful Christian living.

- **2 John is distinct from 1 John** in both style and focus. Unlike the broader theology of 1 John, 2 John is a brief, personal letter to a specific church, urging believers to walk in truth and love and warning them not to welcome false teachers. Its pointed guidance on rejecting those who deny Christ sets it apart, blending pastoral warmth with clear boundaries to protect doctrinal integrity.
- **Personal Application:** As you read 2 John, consider how you can balance genuine love with discernment, ensuring that your relationships and hospitality are grounded in the truth of Christ's teaching.

Text to be Covered:

2 John 1–13 (The elder's letter to the elect lady and her children: walking in truth and love, warning against deceivers, holding fast to Christ's teaching)

- **2 John 1–3: Love is rooted in truth.**

“The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”

- John opens his letter by expressing love “in the truth” and blessing the recipients. Genuine Christian love begins with a shared commitment to the truth of Christ's teaching, not mere sentiment. Our relationships should be grounded in this unchanging truth.

- **2 John 4–6: Obedience defines love.**

“I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.”

- John rejoices that the children “walk in truth,” reminding them of the original command: “that we love one another.” Love is not an abstract feeling, but a practical expression seen in obedience to God’s commandments. Walking in love means living according to God’s revealed will, showing that truth and love are inseparable in faithful living.

- **2 John 7: Guarding against deception.**

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

- John warns that “many deceivers are entered into the world,” specifically those who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Practicing discernment is essential to protect ourselves and the church from falsehood. Love must not become complicity with error; instead, it should be vigilant, upholding doctrinal integrity.

- **2 John 8–9: Discernment protects the community.**

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

- Believers are urged to “look to yourselves” and remain faithful to Christ’s doctrine. Those who do not abide in Christ’s teaching “have not God.” Discernment ensures that the church remains united in truth, shielding the community from teachings that undermine the foundation of faith.

- **2 John 10–11: Hospitality requires wisdom.**

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

- John instructs believers not to welcome into their homes anyone who brings false doctrine. This is not a lack of love, but a measure of wisdom, ensuring that hospitality does not inadvertently support or enable those spreading error. It is a safeguard to maintain purity and faithfulness in the church.

- **2 John 12–13: Faithful love and truth in fellowship.**

“Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.”

- The closing verses express John’s desire for face-to-face fellowship “that our joy may be full,” reminding us that genuine Christian relationship flourishes when both love and truth are present.

Cross-References

- 2 John 1:5-6 (the enduring command to love one another)
- John 15:12-13 (Jesus' commandment of love)
- 1 John 2:7-11 (abiding in the light through love)
- Matthew 7:15 (warning against false prophets)
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (call to separate from error)
- Galatians 1:6-9 (defending the true gospel)

Highlight

Christology: II John affirms Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, emphasizing the reality of His incarnation. The letter urges steadfastness in Christ's teaching and cautions against those who deny Him, underscoring the inseparability of truth and love in Christian faith.

Child of God: True children of God “walk in truth” and “walk in love.” II John teaches that obedience to God's commandments and discerning affirmation of true doctrine are foundational to Christian life. Faithful love is expressed through truth, and truth is upheld through loving obedience.

Application: Remain faithful to Christ's teaching, showing hospitality and love to those who share the truth, but exercising discernment against those who distort the doctrine of Christ. Let your life reflect both unwavering truth and genuine love.

✅ **Summary Statement:** 2 John calls believers to remain rooted in both truth and love, holding fast to the authentic teaching of Christ and living out genuine obedience. The letter warns against false teachers who distort the doctrine of Christ, urging the community to exercise discernment and avoid enabling error. By walking in truth and expressing love through faithful obedience, Christians reflect the fullness of God's call—upholding sound doctrine and genuine fellowship within the body of Christ.

III John: Truth, Hospitality, and Godly Example

The book of 3 John was written by the apostle John to his beloved friend **Gaius**, a faithful believer known for his commitment to the truth and his generous hospitality toward gospel workers. John's purpose was to commend Gaius for supporting those who spread the truth, to warn against the prideful opposition of Diotrephes, and to encourage the imitation of godly examples like Demetrius. As we read and study this brief letter, we gain valuable insight into the importance of walking in truth, practicing hospitality, and discerning between faithful servants and self-serving leaders. This message remains relevant, reminding us that truth and love are expressed through humble service, support of gospel mission, and godly living.

- **3 John is distinct from 2 John in both style and focus.** While 2 John warns against showing hospitality to false teachers, 3 John commends the faithful support of true teachers. Together, these letters balance love with discernment—rejecting error while embracing those who labor for the truth.
- **Personal Application:** As you read 3 John, consider how you can actively support faithful gospel workers in your community and around the world, while also guarding against prideful or divisive influences that hinder the work of Christ.

Text to be Covered:

3 John 1–15 (The elder's letter to Gaius: walking in truth, supporting gospel workers, warning against pride, imitating godly examples, and rejoicing in fellowship).

3 John 1–4: Walking in the Truth Brings Joy

"The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

- John opens with affection, praying for Gaius's health and prosperity, even as his soul prospers.
- He rejoices that Gaius is walking in the truth, which brings him the greatest joy as a spiritual father.

Application: True prosperity is measured not by wealth but by spiritual health. Walking in truth is the highest joy of Christian fellowship.

3 John 5–8: Hospitality to Gospel Workers

“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”

- Gaius is commended for his faithful hospitality to traveling missionaries, even those he did not know personally.
- Supporting gospel workers makes one a “fellowhelper to the truth.”

Application: Hospitality is not just kindness—it is partnership in gospel mission. By supporting those who proclaim Christ, we share in their work.

3 John 9–10: Warning Against Diotrephes

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”

- Diotrephes is rebuked for his pride, love of preeminence, rejection of apostolic authority, and refusal to welcome missionaries.
- His divisive actions harmed the church and opposed the work of Christ.

Application: Pride and self-promotion are dangerous in church leadership. True leaders serve humbly and welcome those who labor for the gospel.

3 John 11–12: Following Godly Examples

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”

- John exhorts Gaius to imitate good, not evil.
- Demetrius is commended as a faithful example, affirmed by all and by the truth itself.

Application: Godly examples inspire faithfulness. Believers are called to imitate those who live in truth and goodness.

3 John 13–15: Joy in Fellowship

“I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.”

- John closes with a desire for face-to-face fellowship, emphasizing the joy of personal relationship in Christ.
- Greetings are exchanged, showing the warmth of Christian community.

Application: Genuine fellowship is personal, relational, and rooted in truth. In an age of distance, we must value face-to-face encouragement and joy in Christ.

Cross-References

- 3 John 4 – Compare with 2 John 4 (joy in children walking in truth).
 - Matthew 10:40–42 – Welcoming Christ's messengers is welcoming Christ Himself.
 - Hebrews 13:2 – Do not neglect hospitality.
 - 1 Peter 5:2–3 – Shepherds must serve willingly, not domineering.
 - Philippians 2:3–4 – Humility over selfish ambition.
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Highlight

Christology: 3 John affirms Christ's truth as the standard for fellowship and mission. Supporting those who proclaim Christ is participation in His work.

Child of God: True children of God walk in truth, show hospitality to gospel workers, reject prideful opposition, and imitate godly examples.

Application: Actively support faithful servants of Christ. Guard against prideful, self-promoting influences. Let your life be marked by truth, humility, and joyful fellowship.

✅ Summary Statement:

3 John teaches us that genuine Christian living is marked by **walking in truth, supporting gospel workers, rejecting prideful opposition, and imitating godly examples**. Truth and love are not abstract—they are lived out in hospitality, humility, and fellowship.
