

AN 11-WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON
THE LETTERS OF JOHN



*Because
He first
loved us*

BINDI KIREGU

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THE LETTERS OF JOHN



BINDI KIREGU

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Introduction

Introduction

The Letters of John were written to Christians who were being misled by false teachers. John writes to them to remind them of the truth and equip them to recognise and throw out the lies.

In doing so, John gives them answers to big questions like "What does it look like to be a genuine follower of Christ?", "How can I tell if the teachings I am listening to are the truth or lies?" Big questions that are all still just as relevant to us today.

As you study the Letters of John, you will hopefully:

- grow in clarity about who God is and what it looks like to follow him
- grow in your love for God and his ways
- grow in your ability to recognise false teachers

Additionally, this study is designed to help you not only study the Letters of John, but also learn how to study the Bible in general. The study process we'll use is easy to learn and easy to apply when you go on to study any of the other books of the Bible.

Introduction

Below is an outline of what is contained in this Bible study:

- **A list of reasons why you need to study the Bible daily** for easy reference during times of demotivation.
Whether you already have a vibrant habit of studying the Bible or you are completely new to this, we all have times when we feel demotivated to keep up the habit, and we need reminders of why studying the Bible daily is necessary.
- **A process** for you to follow in order to study the Bible correctly.
- **Questions** to help you study the Letters of John (1st John, 2nd John and 3rd John).
These will enable you to put the process to practice while also providing a resource you can use to study the Bible with friends, so that you have more motivation, accountability, and get to experience the joy of growing in your faith together.
- **Supporting audios** which you can stream or download at www.bindikiregu.com

Introduction

This study is designed to be done weekly, either alone or as a small group.

If you are doing this study alone:

- Set aside a daily time and place in which you can do the questions for the week
- Do a few questions every day
- After completing all the questions, listen to the audio for that week

If you are doing the study as a group meeting weekly:

- Choose the day and time that you will be meeting weekly
- Set aside a daily time and place in which you can do the questions for the week alone
- Do a few questions every day
- After completing all the questions, listen to the audio for that week
- Meet with your group on the chosen day and time and discuss the questions that stood out to each of you that week (rather than going through all of them again together). Also share each of your answers to the two questions under the 'Every Week' title at the end of each week from Week 4

Introduction

Tools you will need for the study:

- **Bibles** (Physical or Online versions of the ESV and NLT Bible Translations)
- **Dictionary** (Physical or Online versions) Many of the questions in the study ask you to look up definitions
- **Pens** for writing down your answers in the spaces provided
- **Highlighters or colour pencils** for marking up the Bible excerpts of the weekly scripture text which are provided at the beginning of each week of questions

SET YOUR PERSONAL GOALS:

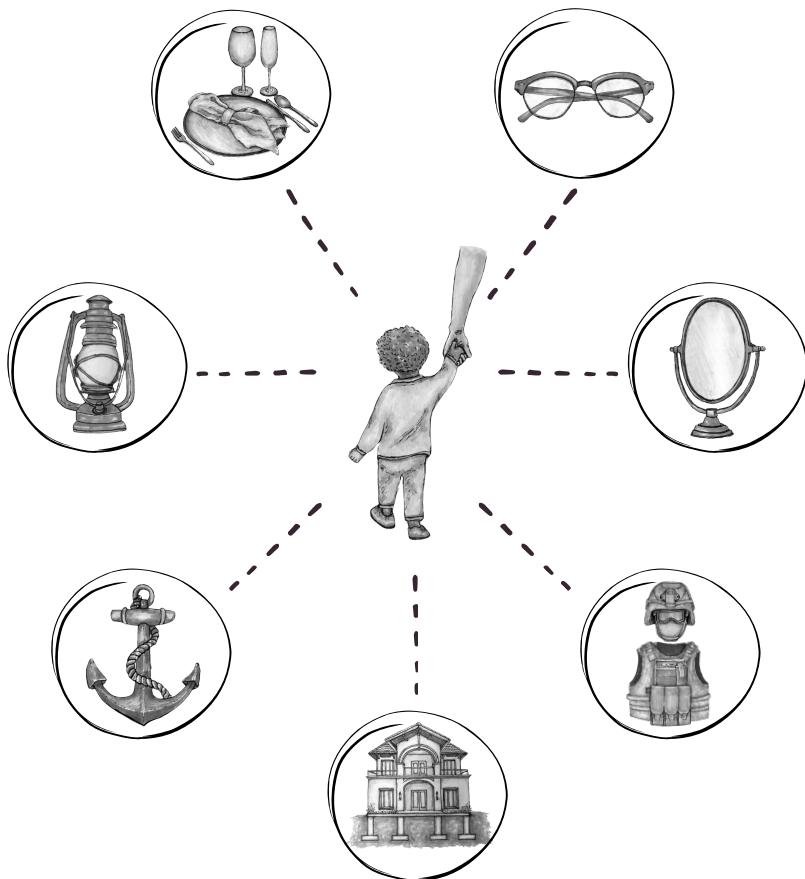
1. What do you hope to get out of doing this study?

2. Write down the time and place in which you will be doing the questions daily (Consistency is key, so choose a time and place that are realistically easy for you to maintain daily):

Week 1:

*Why you need to
study the Bible
daily*

8 REASONS WHY YOU NEED TO



STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

1. AN INVITATION TO KNOW YOUR CREATOR

and walk with him all the days of your life:



The primary means that God has given you to correctly and continually know him and walk with him, is the Bible.

Having faith in God simply means trusting him. You cannot have faith in someone that you don't know.

*Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love,
for in you I trust.*

*Make me know the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.*

PSALM 143:8

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

2. A CLEAR LENS to see the world correctly:



The primary means God has given you to transform your mind and shape the lens through which you view the world (your worldview), is the Bible.

You cannot understand and interpret the world around you correctly without his word.

*The commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes.*

PSALM 19:8b

3. AN UNDISTORTED MIRROR

to see yourself correctly:



The primary means God has given you to see yourself correctly, is the Bible.

You cannot rightly understand yourself (why you exist, where your value and identity should come from, where your brokenness, sinfulness and struggles come from) apart from his word.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he looks like.

JAMES 1:23-27

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

4. ARMOUR

for the battles you face with the enemy:



The primary means God has given you to fight against the schemes of the devil in your life, is the Bible.

The devil is first and foremost an enemy of God, which makes him an enemy of the truth and ultimately a liar- 'the father of lies'. His schemes are all rooted in lies. You cannot fight against lies without the truth, we find the truth in God's word.

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armour so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.

EPHESIANS 6:10-11

5. A SOLID FOUNDATION

to build your life on:



The primary means God has given you to build your life on unshakable ground, is the Bible.

God is our solid foundation. There is nothing in your life that is as stable as him. When you build your life on the truth about him found in his word, you can withstand the inevitable storms of life that will come your way.

"As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.

They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.

When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."

LUKE 6:47-48

6. A STRONG ANCHOR to keep you from drifting:



The primary means God has given you to protect you from being carried away by the currents of the world and your flesh, is the Bible.

At any given time you are either actively following Christ, or you are drifting off towards destruction. His word gives you an anchor to the truth.

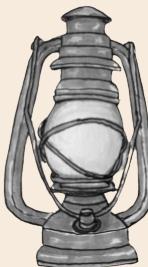
Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

HEBREWS 2:1

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

7. A LAMP to light the way before you:



The primary means God has given you to grow in knowledge and wisdom, is the Bible.

God gives you knowledge of what is good and what is evil through his word, and God gives you wisdom by transforming you through his word to love what is good and hate what is evil.

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

PSALM 119:105

8. NOURISHMENT AND REFRESHMENT

for your soul:



The primary means God has given you to nourish and refresh your soul, is the Bible.

Just like your body was made to be nourished by good food, your soul was made to be nourished by his word. Nothing else can accomplish that.

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

MATTHEW 4:4

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

SECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Read Psalm 19:7-11 and Deut 6:4-9. These texts describe the word of God as a treasure for us and something our lives are to be saturated with and shaped by. Is this your current view and approach to the Bible? If not, what is your current view of the Bible?

2. a) Are any of the 8 reasons listed in this section new to you?

b) Is there one or more that you know but often forget about?

c) Do you find any of them unrealistic or hard to believe? If yes, why?

3. For each of the 8 reasons given, think through what alternatives you tend to turn to as a primary means of achieving these things.

a) An invitation to know God (what other avenues do you tend to turn to as your primary way to try to know God better? E.g. Books about Christianity, Daily devotions, Pastors, online ministries)

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

b) A clear lens to the see the world correctly (what other avenues do you tend to turn to as your primary help to understand life/people/work/family etc?)

c) An undistorted mirror to see yourself correctly (what other avenues do you tend to turn to to find your identity, self-worth and to gain self-awareness?)

d) Armour for the battles you face with the enemy (what other avenues do you tend to turn to to recognise and fight against the strategies of the devil?)

e) A solid foundation to build your life on (what other avenues do you tend to turn to as the primary source of security in your life?)

Why

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY

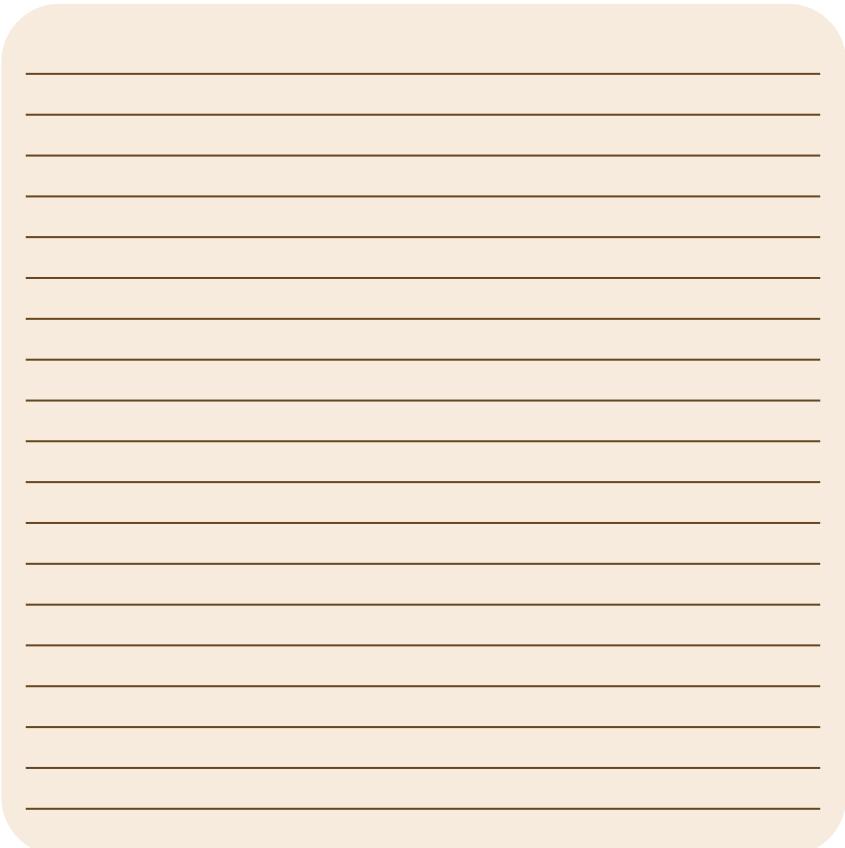
f) **A strong anchor to keep you from drifting** (what other avenues do you tend to turn to as your primary protection from drifting in your relationship with God?)

g) **A lamp to light the way before us** (what other avenues do you tend to turn to as a primary source of wisdom for your life?)

h) **Nourishment and refreshment for your soul** (what other avenues do you tend to turn to to nourish and refresh you when you are feeling depleted?)

4. Have you been able to start and keep a habit of studying your Bible daily? If not, what do you think has prevented you from doing so?

Notes from the audio



15 horizontal lines for writing notes.

Week 2:

*How you should
study the Bible*

How

YOU SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE

View every book as part of a larger story that is all about God

Each book in the Bible is one part of a collection of 66 books, written over a period of 1500 years, by approximately 40 authors. The authors lived at different points in history, in a wide range of cultures, languages, backgrounds, social classes and occupations. Their writings display an array of personalities and writing styles, each making a unique and valuable contribution.

Amazingly, these 66 books come together to tell one cohesive story about one main character- God. This story starts with him creating everything in Genesis, and ends with him renewing everything in Revelation. Through this story from Creation to New Creation, the Bible reveals to us the God of the universe, displaying his nature, his character and his epic plan for humanity.

An overview of the plot of this story can be found on the next page.

When you approach the Bible with this in mind, you will come to it primarily to seek to know God. And in doing so, you'll find that through knowing Him you will also find self-discovery, wisdom for your life, and the empowerment to live out that wisdom.

If we come to the Bible with the right intentions (seeking to know God) and read it the right way (the way it was intended to be read), we find it to be a gold mine that we can never deplete.

A life-changing treasure from God to us.

1. CREATION



Where everything began

The Bible story starts off with the triune God sovereignly and perfectly creating everything.

We see him make the first human beings, Adam and Eve, in his image and inviting them to rule over the earth under him.

(Genesis 1 & 2)

A 4-PART SUMMARY OF

2. FALL



Why there is brokenness, suffering and evil in the world

The story then takes a dark turn as Adam and Eve believe the lies of the devil that God could not be trusted and that they could be their own gods.

They rebel against God and this results in humanity being separated from God, and ushers sin and death into the world, bringing about our need for a saviour.

(Genesis 3)

3. REDEMPTION



What God has done (and is doing) about it

We then see God chose to create a nation through which he would reveal himself and his ways to the world, and through which the saviour would come.

We see Jesus, the Son of God, come to earth as our promised saviour. On our behalf he lives the perfectly obedient life we couldn't live, dies a sacrificial death as our substitute, and rises from the dead victorious, making a way for man to be reconciled to God and establishing his kingdom.

This brings us to today where God is currently redeeming people from every tribe, tongue and nation and bringing them into his kingdom.

(Gen 3:15, Gen 12:1-3, Isaiah 53, Mark 1:14-15, John 19:17-30, Col 1:13-23)

4. NEW CREATION



Where everything is headed

In conclusion, the Bible then tells us how God's epic story for humanity will find its culmination- Jesus will return, gathering those he has redeemed and renewing all creation.

Sin and death will be no more, heaven and the new earth will become one, man will rule the new earth under God, and man and God will dwell together eternally.

(Rev 21:1-4, Isaiah 65:17-25)

THE PLOT OF THE BIBLE STORY

How YOU SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE

To read the Bible in a meaningful and accurate way, we have to read it the way it was intended to be read.

To do this, we'll follow a **4-step process**:

- Step 1** → **BACKGROUND**
- Step 2** → **OBSERVATION**
- Step 3** → **INTERPRETATION**
- Step 4** → **APPLICATION**

Like all new habits, following a process may feel mechanical at first but as you keep practicing it, it eventually becomes second nature and you won't have to put in any effort to follow the process.

To illustrate the importance of following the right process, we will use a famous verse from the book of Philippians (Phil 4:13):

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

If you pick out this text as a stand-alone text and skip the first 3 steps and go straight to Step 4 (application) as people often do, you end up using this verse as an encouragement that through the power of Christ you can accomplish all you desire to accomplish.

Let's go through the correct process and see what application we actually end up with.

Step 1: Background

This step involves taking note of the **genre/literary style** and **setting** of the book you are reading- **the what? who? when? where? & why?**

THE 'WHAT':

The Bible is essentially a library of 66 books. Different books have different genres. So we start off by identifying what **genre** the book we are studying is- *What type of literature am I looking at? Is it narrative history, wisdom, prophecy, gospels, letters/epistles or apocalyptic?*

THE 'WHO', 'WHEN', 'WHERE' & 'WHY':

These are about the **setting** of the book, its historical and cultural context- *Who wrote it? Who was it written to? When was it written? What was going on at the time? Why was it written?*

Knowing the background of the book helps us read it the way it was intended to be read

Step 1: Background

SECTION QUESTIONS:

Now go ahead and do this background step for our example text, Philippians 4:13. Make sure you don't just memorise the information that you find, but that you'd instead be able to picture the people involved and the context they are in. It should become real to you.

Fill in your answers below about the background of the book of Philippians*

GENRE:	
AUTHOR:	
RECIPIENTS:	
DATE WRITTEN:	
PURPOSE IT WAS WRITTEN:	

*Where to find the backgrounds of books of the Bible:

- If you have a Study Bible, you'll usually find the background of the book on the first page of that particular book in the Study Bible.
- If you don't have a Study Bible, you can do an online search on the background of any book and find a wealth of resources.

Step 2: Observation

In this step we answer the question- **What does the text say?**

We read what the text says with the mindset that the Bible was written very thoughtfully and that God chose the **details, descriptions, imagery**, and the **overall tone** for every text deliberately. So, we pay attention to all the details.

Before we try to understand what a text means or how it applies to our lives, we need to know what it actually says

To do the observation step for our example text, we'll use the portion of text in which that verse is found, in order to get context:

'10 How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. 11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength. 14 Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty.'

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14

Step 2: Observation

SECTION QUESTIONS:

Read through the portion of text (Philippians 4:10-14) and answer the following questions:

1. What is the tone of this passage? Does the author (Paul) sound excited/angry/grateful etc?

2. Does he use any imagery, or make any comparisons or contrasts?

3. Circle any linking words in the text (e.g. *but, for, even so, not that, etc.*). These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

4. Note down any phrases or themes that are repeated in the text. These show the author placing emphasis on a point.

Step 3: Interpretation

In this step we answer the question- **What does the text mean?**

To do this we will include the following practices:

- **Looking up definitions of words** to get a better understanding of the text
- **Thinking through why particular stories/imagery etc were included in the text**
- **Looking at other texts in the Bible to give us a better understanding of the text we are reading.** This is because the Bible interprets the Bible.

Most importantly, we interpret the text keeping in mind that the whole Bible is primarily about God. **So we look to understand what this text tells us about God- Who he is, what his character is like; how he views his creation, and what his will is for our lives.**

After knowing the background of the text and what the text says, we can then think through what it means

Step 3: Interpretation

SECTION QUESTIONS:

Keeping in mind the background of the book of Philippians and the observation you did in the previous step, read through the portion of text again (Philippians 4:10-14) and answer the following questions:

1. Whose mission was Paul on?

2. In what state was Paul in at the time of writing this letter? Was he in a season of having a lot or a little?

3. What lessons does he describe learning?

4. When he says that he 'can do all things through Christ who strengthens him', what kind of things was he describing needing/using strength for?

5. What does this text tell us about God in regards to his will for our lives and how he relates to us as we live it out?

Step 4: Application

In this final step we answer the question- **How should I respond?**

After reflecting on God's character and his ways in Step 3, we then reflect on how the original recipients were supposed to respond to the text- **How was it meant to impact their lives?**

And lastly, we reflect on how we should respond- **How should you in particular respond?**

→ **What has the text shown you about God?**

→ **What has it shown you about yourself?**

→ **What actions is he calling you to?**

After knowing the background of the text, what it says and what it means, we now reflect on what response God is calling us to

Step 4: Application

SECTION QUESTIONS:

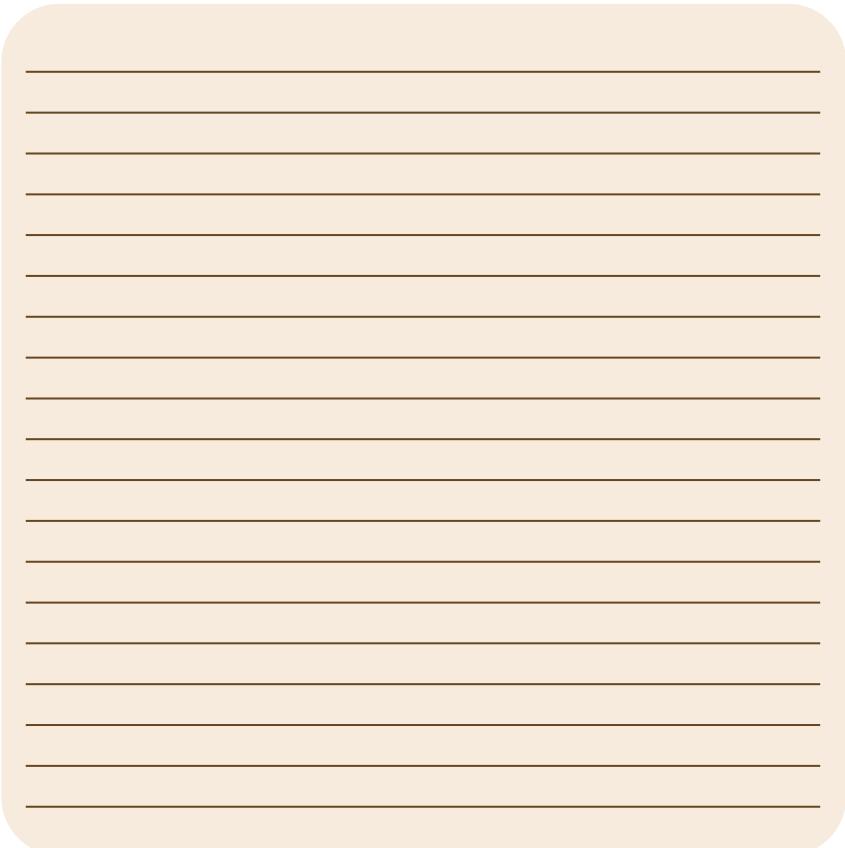
1. What message was Paul teaching/encouraging the church in Philippi with through this message? How did he want them to view his circumstances and how did he want them to view God?

2. What response would the text have been calling them to have? What actions should they take? In which ways should they pray?

3. What response does the text call you to have? Is there any change of perspective you should make about God or life circumstances?

4. In what ways do you need Christ to strengthen you? Write these down in the form of a prayer to God.

Notes from the audio



12 horizontal lines for writing notes.

Week 3:
Background of
the Apostle John
& 1st John

Background OF THE AUTHOR

Let's look at who John was and what his relationship with Jesus was from the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry to the end of it:

1. Read Luke 5:1-11 and answer the following questions:

a. Who were John's father and brother?

b. What was John's occupation when he met Jesus and who else was he partnering with in his work alongside his father and brother?

c. What did Jesus do that had an impact on him?

d. How did John respond to this event?

2. Read Mark 3:13-19 and answer the following questions:

a. What did Jesus appoint John to be?

Background OF THE AUTHOR

b. What was that role going to entail? (3 things are mentioned)

c. What nickname did Jesus give John and his brother James?

3. Matthew 17:1-13 and Mark 14:32-43 describe 2 notable events in Jesus' life, read through both texts and answer the following questions:

a. What was notable about the two events described in this text.

b. In each incident, Jesus selected 3 out of his 12 disciples to go with them. Write down the names of the 3.

Background OF THE AUTHOR

4. Read John 13:21-30 and answer the following questions:

a. During Jesus' last supper with his disciples before his arrest, where was John ('the disciple whom he loved') seated?

b. What did Peter ask John to do?

5. Read about Jesus' moments before his death in John 19:23-30 and take note of Jesus' interaction with John. What duty did he assign to John?

6. Read John 20:1-18 and answer the following questions:

a. Why do you think John didn't enter the tomb at first?

b. What did Jesus call the disciples in his instruction to Mary?

Background OF THE AUTHOR

7. Read John 20:19-23 and answer the following questions:

a. What state did the risen Jesus find the disciples in?

b. What 'commission' did he give them?

c. How did Jesus empower them for that work?

8. The Gospel of John, which we have read numerous verses from this week, was written by the Apostle John to give us an account of Jesus's life and ministry. Read John 20:30-31 and write down his stated purpose in writing this account.

Background OF THE AUTHOR

SUMMARY:

1. Based on all you have read about John this week, write down in your own words a brief summary of who John was, who he was to Jesus, and who Jesus was to him.

2. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God (Col 1:15-20), what does his relationship with John display about the character of God?

Background

OF 1ST JOHN

GENRE:	Letters
AUTHOR:	John, The Apostle <i>Same author as 2nd & 3rd John, the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation.</i>
RECIPIENTS:	A network of churches likely located in Asia Minor (present day Western Turkey) <i>This is where John lived at the time.</i>
DATE WRITTEN:	Estimated to have been written around AD 90 <i>This is approximately 57 years after Christ's death and resurrection. John would have been an old man at this time, and he was likely the only apostle still alive.</i>
PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ To counter false teachers*→ To reassure believers of their salvation through Christ→ To provide clarity on what true fellowship with God looks like

Background OF 1ST JOHN

*The false teaching being spread at the time was by a movement called Gnosticism, which is alive and well today and prevalent in many 'churches' and 'fellowships' in our context. Its teachings included:

- The philosophy that the spiritual is entirely good and the physical is entirely evil- For example: God is good because he is entirely spirit, and the human body is bad because it's entirely physical.
- God can therefore not take on a human body- So either Jesus Christ was just a man and not God, or he was God and he never really took on a human body even though he might've seemed to have one (his body was some kind of illusion).
- We need to be saved from our ignorance, not from our sin.
Salvation is therefore not achieved by grace through faith in Christ but rather it's achieved by attaining special knowledge- Through this knowledge one achieves a level of spirituality and escapes/transcends the physical.
- Because only the physical is what is considered evil (rather than rebellion against God and breaking his law), there is nothing morally wrong with breaking God's law and living a sinful life- A modern day version of this is people considering themselves 'spiritual' and in tune with God while ignoring his laws and actively living according to their own standards of right and wrong.

Background OF 1ST JOHN

SECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever encountered any similar teachings or known someone living out these beliefs?

2. Do you feel confident that you can identify false 'Christian' teachings when you hear them?

3. Have you ever wondered what true salvation and true fellowship with God should look like?

Notes from the audio



Week 4:
1st John Chapter 1

1st John

CHAPTER 1

ESV

The Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

NLT

Introduction

1 We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. 2 This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so

1st John

CHAPTER 1

ESV

Walking in the Light

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make him a

NLT

that you may fully share our joy.

Living in the light

5 This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. 6 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness, we are not practicing the truth. 7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

1st John

CHAPTER 1

ESV

liar, and his word is not in us

NLT

9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1st John

CHAPTER 1

OBSERVATION:

Read through Chapter 1 (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 55 to 57)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.
-
-

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. *because, but, therefore, so that, since*) and write down (below) the sentence that follows (e.g. *'so that our joy may be complete.'*) These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.
-
-
-

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.
-
-
-

1st John

CHAPTER 1

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 4:

4. Based on the purpose for the letter (outlined on Page 49), which of the false beliefs listed is John countering right from the beginning of his letter?
-
-

5. What 2 reasons does John give for writing to them this letter?
-
-
-

6. Define 'fellowship'.
-
-
-

Read verses 5 to 10:

7. What does it mean that 'God is light and in him there is no darkness at all'? Read Deut 32:4, James 1:17 and Psalm 145:17 and write down your thoughts.

1st John

CHAPTER 1

8. What does it mean for us to 'walk in the light' and what does it mean for us to 'walk in darkness'?

9. Why are we unable to have fellowship with God when we are walking in darkness?

10. Why are we unable to have fellowship with other believers when we are not walking in darkness?

1st John

CHAPTER 1

11. What is God's response to us when we confess our sins? Describe his response in your own words.

12. What does it mean for God to cleanse us?

13. Define 'faithful' and 'just'. Why would it be unfaithful and unjust for God to not forgive us when we repent of our sin?

14. What do we inadvertently call God when we claim to have no sin and what does this claim reveal about us?

1st John

CHAPTER 1

APPLICATION:

15. How were the believers who were receiving John's letter supposed to be impacted by how he describes Jesus at the beginning of chapter 1? How should you be impacted by his description?

16. How does chapter 1 address our temptation to justify any of the sin in our lives?

17. Write down a prayer asking God for help with whatever response you need to make.

1st John

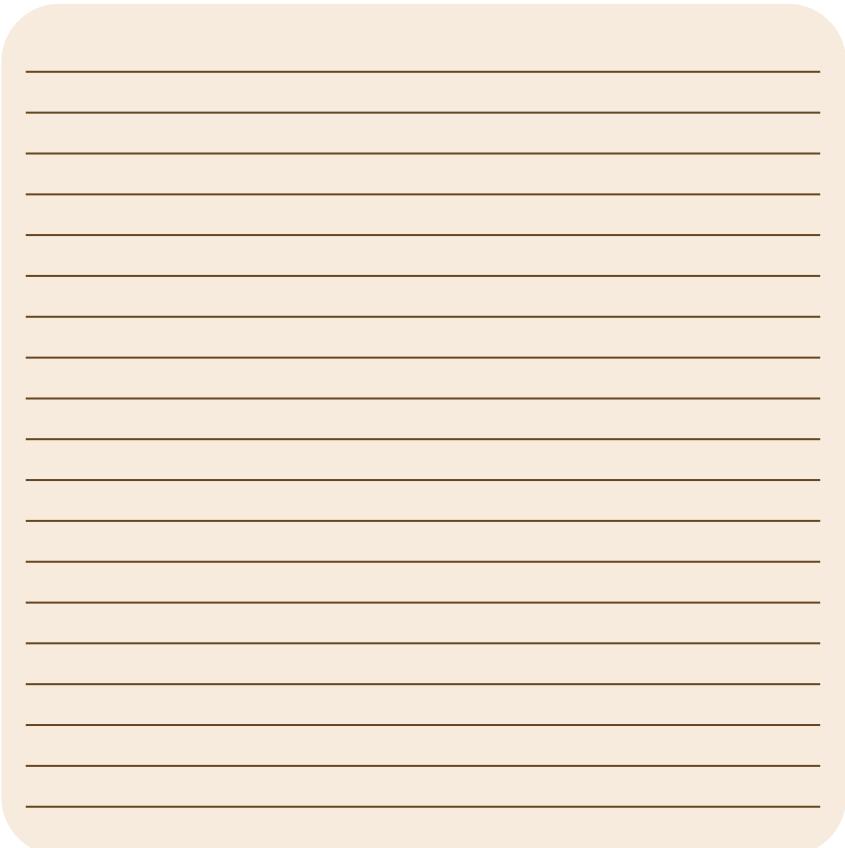
CHAPTER 1

EVERY WEEK:

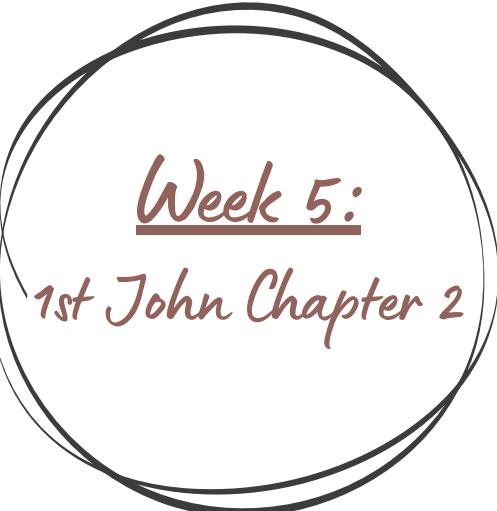
1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



15 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 5:
1st John Chapter 2

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

Christ Our Advocate

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him

NLT

1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. 2 He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

3 And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. 4 If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. 5 But those who obey God's word truly show how

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

The New Commandment

7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in

NLT

completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. 6 Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

A New Commandment

7 Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you, rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. 8 Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining. 9 If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I am writing to you, little children,

because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,

because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,

because you know the Father.

14 I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

NLT

person is still living in darkness. 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.

12 I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.

13 I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in
you,
and you have overcome the evil
one.

Do Not Love the World

15 Do not love the world or the
things in the world. If anyone
loves the world, the love of the
Father is not in him. 16 For all
that is in the world—the desires
of the flesh and the desires of
the eyes and pride of life—is not
from the Father but is from the
world. 17 And the world is
passing away along with its
desires, but whoever does the
will of God abides forever.

Warning Concerning Antichrists
18 Children, it is the last hour,
and as you have heard that

NLT

battle with the evil one.
14 I have written to you who are
God's children

because you know the Father.
I have written to you who are
mature in the faith

because you know Christ, who
existed from the beginning.
I have written to you who are
young in the faith

because you are strong.
God's word lives in your hearts,
and you have won your battle
with the evil one.

Do Not Love This World

15 Do not love this world nor the
things it offers you, for when
you love the world, you do not
have the love of the Father in
you. 16 For the world offers

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the

NLT

only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17 And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Warning about Antichrists

18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. 19 These people left our churches, but they never really

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. 27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

NLT

belonged with us, otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us

20 But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. 21 So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. 22 And who is a liar?

Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. 23 Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

Children of God

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

NLT

24 So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. 25 And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

26 I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray. 27 But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.

1st John

CHAPTER 2

ESV

NLT

Living as Children of God

28 And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.

29 Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all who do what is right are God's children.

1st John

CHAPTER 2

OBSERVATION:

Read through Chapter 2 (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 67 to 74)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. *because, but, therefore, so that, since*) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

1st John

CHAPTER 2

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 6

4. Based on the terms of endearment he uses, describe John's relationship with the people he is writing to?

5. What reason does he give for writing to them?

6. In your own words, define 'advocate' and 'propitiation'.

7. Read Hebrews 4:14-15, and describe what makes Jesus an ideal advocate for us?

1st John

CHAPTER 2

8. Jesus is described in verse 1 as 'the righteous' (ESV) or 'the one who is truly righteous' (NLT). Why is it important for us to know that our advocate before the Father is someone who is truly righteous?
-
-
-
-

9. We know we are unable to live perfectly sinless lives as Jesus did, so what does it mean for us to live our lives as Christ did?
-
-
-
-

Read verses 7 to 11

10. Why should coming to know the Lord cause (and enable) us to love one another?
-
-

1st John

CHAPTER 2

11. Why is it important to the Lord that we love one another? Read John 13:31-35.

12. How does darkness blind our eyes? Read Matthew 6:22-23.

1st John

CHAPTER 2

Read verses 12 to 27

13. How do we 'overcome the evil one'? And how does the description here align with the account we are given in Luke 4:1-13 of how Jesus overcame the temptations of the devil?

14. How did John exhort the believers to not be led astray by the false teachers? How were they to protect themselves from their lies?

1st John

CHAPTER 2

APPLICATION:

15. In your own words, describe what it should look like for you to abide in the Lord and to let his word abide in you.

16. Write a prayer for help with this.

1st John

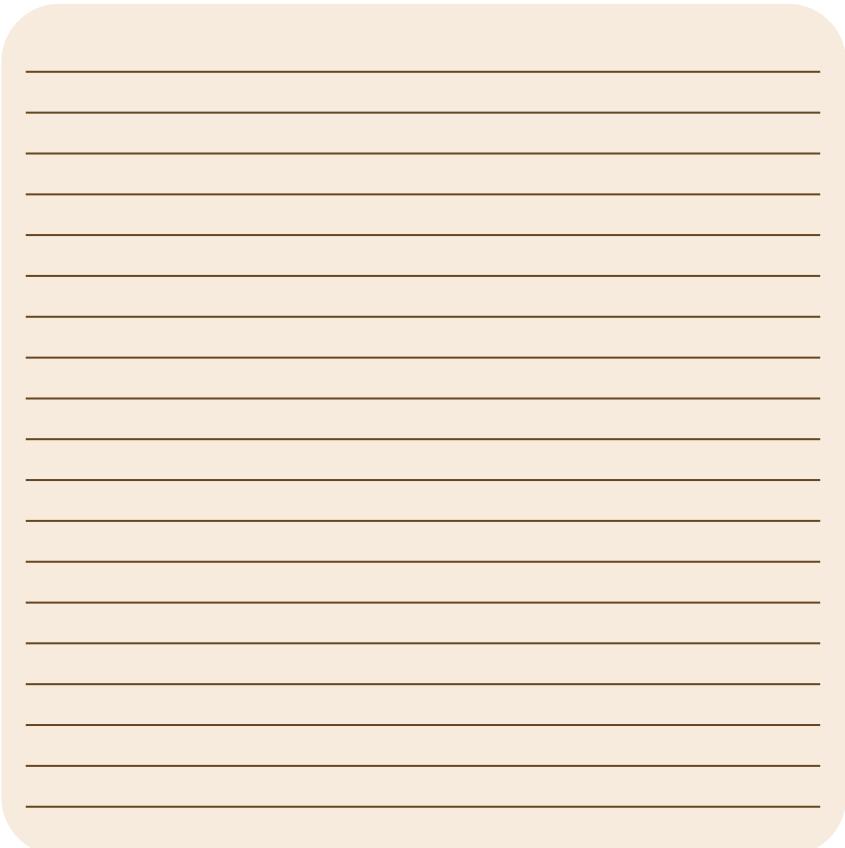
CHAPTER 2

EVERY WEEK:

1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



12 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 6:
1st John Chapter 3

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness, sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on

NLT

1 See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. 2 Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 3 And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

4 Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. 5 And you know that Jesus came

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

sinning, no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of

NLT

to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. 6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.

7 Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 8 But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. 9 Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Love One Another

11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal

NLT

they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. 10 So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.

Love One Another

11 This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. 13 So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

life abiding in him.

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him, 20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God, 22 and whatever we

NLT

14 If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. 15 Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in in that person?

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

ask we receive from him,
because we keep his
commandments and do what
pleases him. 23 And this is his
commandment, that we believe
in the name of his Son Jesus
Christ and love one another,
just as he has commanded us.
24 Whoever keeps his
commandments abides in God,
and God in him. And by this
we know that he abides in us,
by the Spirit whom he has
given us.

NLT

18 Dear children, let's not
merely say that we love each
other, let us show the truth by
our actions. 19 Our actions will
show that we belong to the
truth, so we will be confident
when we stand before God. 20
Even if we feel guilty, God is
greater than our feelings, and
he knows everything.

21 Dear friends, if we don't feel
guilty, we can come to God with
bold confidence. 22 And we will
receive from him whatever we
ask because we obey him and do
the things that please him.

23 And this is his
commandment: We must believe
in the name of his Son, Jesus
Christ, and love one another,

1st John

CHAPTER 3

ESV

NLT

just as he commanded us. 24
Those who obey God's
commandments remain in
fellowship with him, and he
with them. And we know he
lives in us because the Spirit he
gave us lives in us.

1st John

CHAPTER 3

OBSERVATION:

Read through Chapter 3 (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 85 to 90)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. *because, but, therefore, so that, since*) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

1st John

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 3

4. In his letters, John emphasises that true love is proven by actions. Which actions of God are highlighted here as showing us the kind of love he has for us?

5. What does it mean that when Christ returns we will be like him?

Read Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:12-18 and Phil 3:20-21.

6. What is the connection between living in eager expectation of Christ's return and purifying ourselves/keeping ourselves pure?

Read Matthew 25:1-13 and 2 Pet 3:10-18.

Read verses 4 to 9

7. Look up the definitions of the following words:

a. Know (write down 2 definitions for 'know' - the definition for knowing something, and the definition for knowing someone)

1st John

CHAPTER 3

b. Abide

c. Lawless

8. In your own words, define 'sin' and 'righteousness'.

1st John

CHAPTER 3

9. Keeping in mind the definitions you've written in nos 7 and 8, describe the difference between believers (children of God) and non-believers (children of the devil) in regards to sin.

Read verses 10 to 24

10. Read Gen 4:1-16 and describe Cain's view of/heart posture towards God. Also note down any similarities you can identify with the devil's posture towards God.

11. Using the examples of Cain and Jesus, describe the connection between what each of them is ruled by and how they treated their brothers. Read James 1:14-15 and Gal 5:13-26.

1st John

CHAPTER 3

APPLICATION:

12. Before God calls us to abide in him, He first abides in us and seals his commitment to us by giving us his Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13-14). This enables us to know him and love him, and no longer be enslaved to sin, while also producing in us a love for fellow believers.

Reflect on whether you have seen evidence of this in your life.

13. If you have seen evidence of this in your life, then write a prayer thanking God for his saving work in your life, and asking for his help in the areas you currently need to grow in (rebellion, and loving your brothers).

If you have seen no evidence of this in your life, then write a prayer thanking God for bringing this to light, and asking him to save you and give you a new heart towards him.

1st John

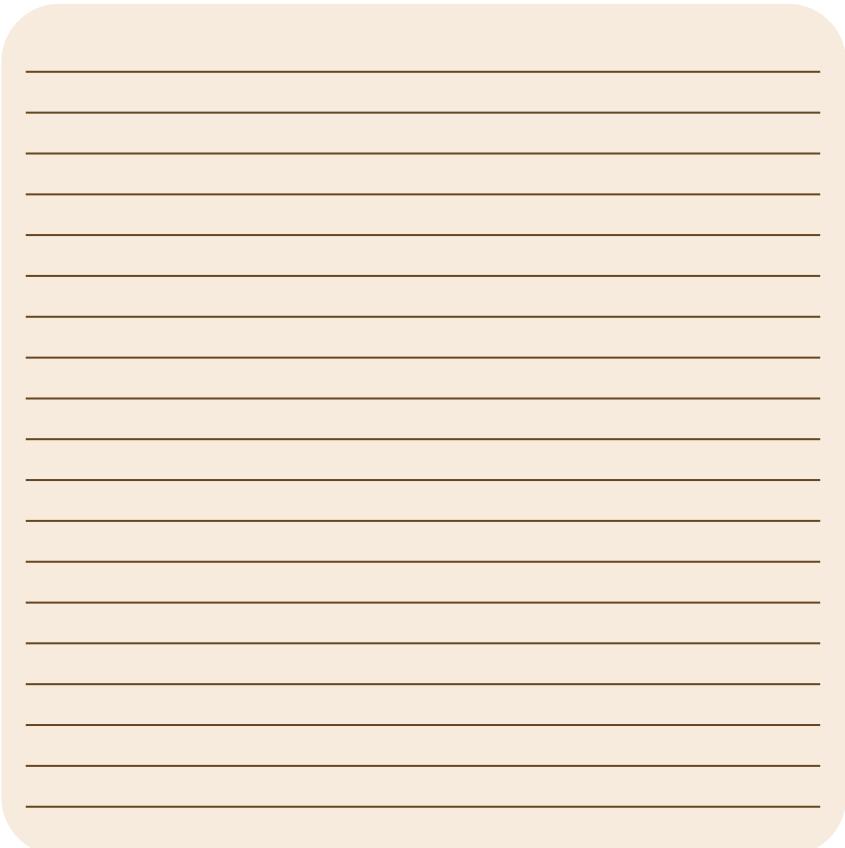
CHAPTER 3

EVERY WEEK:

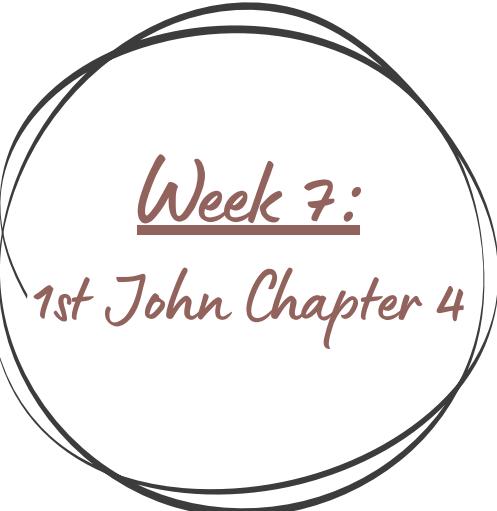
1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



15 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 7:
1st John Chapter 4

1st John

CHAPTER 4

ESV

Test the Spirits

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. 4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world, therefore they speak from the world, and the world

NLT

Discerning False Prophets

1 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2 This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. 3 But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already

1st John

CHAPTER 4

ESV

listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for

NLT

here.

4 But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. 5 Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. 6 But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

Loving One Another

7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes

1st John

CHAPTER 4

ESV

our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God, if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this is love perfected with us, so

NLT

from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10 This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full

1st John

CHAPTER 4

ESV

that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

NLT

expression in us.

13 And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we

1st John

CHAPTER 4

ESV

NLT

can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first.

20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar, for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

1st John

CHAPTER 4

OBSERVATION:

Read through Chapter 4 (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 101 to 105)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. because, but, therefore, so that, since) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

1st John

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 6

4. What are the 2 things John instructs the believers to look out for to show them whether a prophet is being led by the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) or by a Spirit that is against God (Spirit of the antichrist)?
-
-

5. In verse 6, when John says 'we' and 'us', who is he referring to and what kind of authority did their words have? Read Acts 2:41-42, 1 Cor 14:37-38 and 2 Peter 3:15-16.
-
-

6. Think about the context of this letter- the time in history, the people involved and the issues that were going on in their churches. (Re-read the Background on Pages 48 & 49 to refresh your memory)

Should we use these same tests to evaluate prophets or preachers today to know if they are being led by God? In which ways yes and in which ways no? Read Gal 1:6-9 and 1 Tim 6:3-5.

1st John

CHAPTER 4

Read verses 7 to 12

7. What actions did God the Father and Jesus take that show their love for us?
-
-
-

8. Keeping in mind what God has modeled for us, write a definition for love in your own words. Read Luke 22:41-44.

9. God commands us to love others the way he has loved us. Sometimes this is hard and painful, but in Jesus we have a model for how to endure.

How was he able to endure the suffering and shame that came with the cross? Read Hebrews 12:1-3.

1st John

CHAPTER 4

10. In verse 12, what are we promised if we love one another?

Read verses 13 to 21

11. How does God's love for us remove all fear of the day of judgment and how does removing this fear impact our ability to love God?

12. How does fear in general impact our ability to love others?

1st John

CHAPTER 4

APPLICATION:

13. Reflect on ways you struggle to obey the Lord's command to love others. Think of specific people in your life that you are finding it hard to love, and the fears you may have that hinder you from loving those people.

Then rewrite verses 10 to 12 as an instruction from God to you personally, ending with what he promises you regarding this specific issue.

14. Write a prayer to God about this. Thanking him, asking him for help etc
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1st John

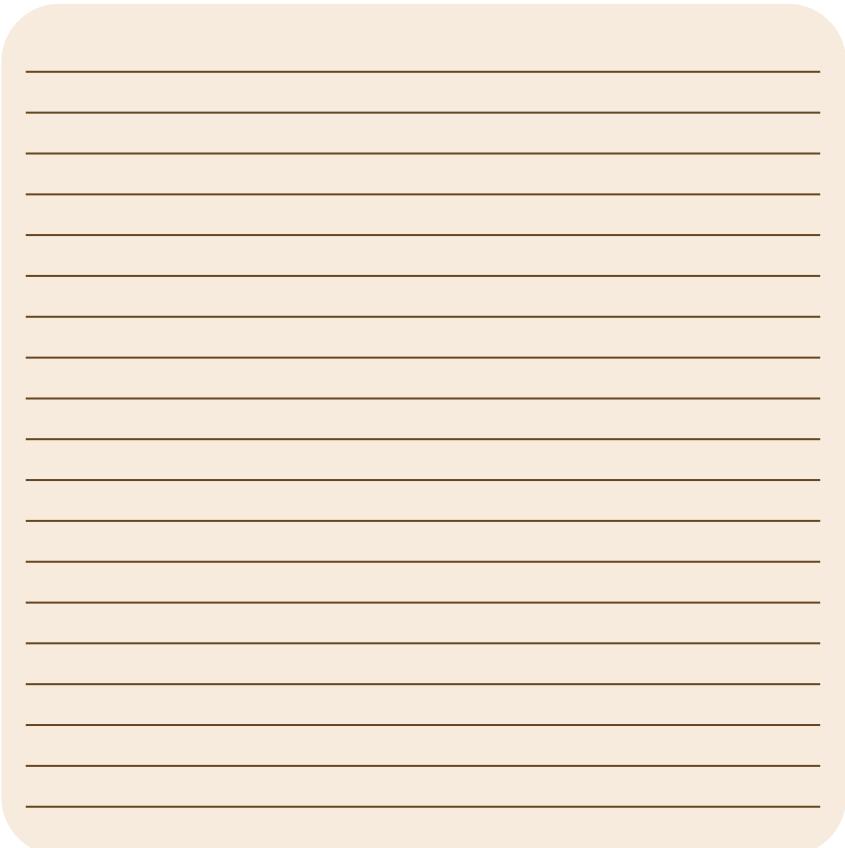
CHAPTER 4

EVERY WEEK:

1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



15 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 8:
1st John Chapter 5

1st John

CHAPTER 5

ESV

Overcoming the World

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

NLT

Faith in the Son of God

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. 2 We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. 3 Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 5 And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

6 And Jesus Christ was revealed

1st John

CHAPTER 5

ESV

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ, not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree. 9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony

NLT

as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. 7 So we have these three witnesses— 8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. 9 Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son.

11 And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life, whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

1st John

CHAPTER 5

ESV

that God has borne concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life, whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

That You May Know

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

NLT

Conclusion

13 I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. 14 And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. 15 And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

16 If you see a fellow believer sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it. 17 All

1st John

CHAPTER 5

ESV

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death, I do not say that one should pray for that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

NLT

wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death.

18 We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. 19 We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus

1st John

CHAPTER 5

ESV

20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

NLT

Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.

21 Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.

1st John

CHAPTER 5

OBSERVATION:

Read through Chapter 5 (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 115 to 119)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. because, but, therefore, so that, since) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

1st John

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 5

4. In your own words, define the following terms used in the text (in the ESV version):

a. Burdensome

b. Overcome

c. The World

d. Faith

5. In your own words define the opposite of each of those 4 terms and write an opposite version of verses 3 to 5 (in the ESV version) i.e. 'For this is hatred of God...'

1st John

CHAPTER 5

Read verses 6 to 10

6. What events are being referred to through which God the Father testified that Jesus is his Son by the Spirit, water and blood?
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-

7. In the churches John was writing to, people were being led astray by listening to the testimonies of which men over the testimony of God?
-
-
-

8. Every time we believe the lies of the world, what are we effectively calling God?
-
-
-

1st John

CHAPTER 5

9. In every temptation, what are the 2 things about God that the world (and our flesh) are essentially asking us to question/doubt. Read Gen 3:1-6.

Read verses 11 to 21

10. What is eternal life and where do we find it? John 5:24, 6:40, 17:1-3 & 11:25-26

11. Where were the false prophets pointing people to to find eternal life? (Refer to the false teachings breakdown on Page 49)

12. What other places, people, or things can you think of that the world points us to to find eternal life?

1st John

CHAPTER 5

13. Being in relationship with God comes with many benefits, which ones does John outline here?

APPLICATION:

14. John ends his letter with an exhortation (verse 21). Rewrite it in your own words to yourself and refer to specific idols that you find yourself tempted with.

e.g. *[your name]*, do not believe in the lie that *[specific idols]* will bring you life to the fullest...

15. Write a prayer to God for help with this.

1st John

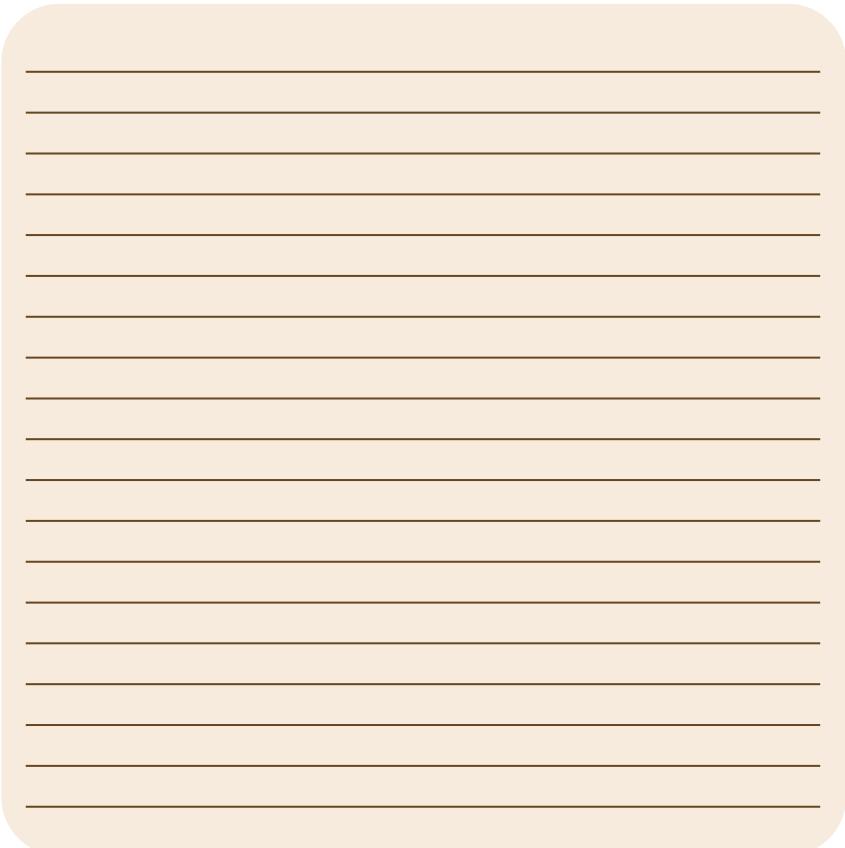
CHAPTER 5

EVERY WEEK:

1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



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Week 9:
2nd John

Background OF 2ND JOHN

GENRE:	Letters
AUTHOR:	John, The Apostle <i>Same author as 1st & 3rd John, the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation.</i>
RECIPIENTS:	'The elect lady and her children' <i>This letter was written to a house church in the same network of local churches that 1st John was written to. 'The elect lady' was possibly a reference to the church, or to a lady hosting the church in her house.</i>
DATE WRITTEN:	Estimated to have been written between AD 85 and AD 90 <i>The same timeframe that 1st John was written in.</i>
PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ To counter the same Gnostic false teachers as in 1st John→ To emphasise the fundamentals of Christian living i.e. Walking in the truth of God and love for each other

2nd John

ESV

Greeting

1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, 2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

Walking in Truth and Love

4 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. 5 And now I ask you, dear lady—not

NLT

Greetings

1 This letter is from John, the elder.

I am writing to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I love in the truth—as does everyone else who knows the truth— 2 because the truth lives in us and will be with us forever.

3 Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will continue to be with us who live in truth and love.

Live in the Truth

4 How happy I was to meet some

2nd John

ESV

as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning —that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments, this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and

NLT

of your children and find them living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded.

5 I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we should love one another. This is not a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning. 6 Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning.

7 I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and

2nd John

ESV

does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

Final Greetings

12 Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

NLT

an antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. 9 Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. 11 Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.

2nd John

ESV

13 The children of your elect sister greet you.

NLT

Conclusion

12 I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper and ink. For I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete.

13 Greetings from the children of your sister, chosen by God.

2nd John

OBSERVATION:

Read through 2nd John (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 130 to 133)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. because, but, therefore, so that, since) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

2nd John

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 4

4. In these first 4 verses, how many times does John mention 'truth'?

5. Read John 18:37-38. What did Jesus say was the purpose for which he came to the world?

6. Reflect on Pilate's question to Jesus in verse 38. In our culture today where there's a common belief that everyone is entitled to 'their truth', how would you answer Pilate's question?

7. What can cause us (believers) to not love and walk in the truth?

2nd John

Read verses 5 to 13

8. John links the believers loving one another to their protection against false teachers(deceivers). How does our love for one another protect us against false teaching? Read Eph 4:11-16, James 5:19-20 and Col 3:16.

9. John warns them to watch themselves against false teachers and not miss out on their 'full reward'. What reward is he referring to? Read Col 3:23-24, Luke 6:22-23, 1 Cor 3:5-15 and Rev 22:12.

2nd John

APPLICATION:

10. John instructed them to not receive false teachers into their houses or give them any greeting (ESV), what did he mean by this instruction and how do we apply it to our context today?

11. Write a prayer for help to love the truth and be committed to walking in it, both personally and alongside other believers encouraging one another.

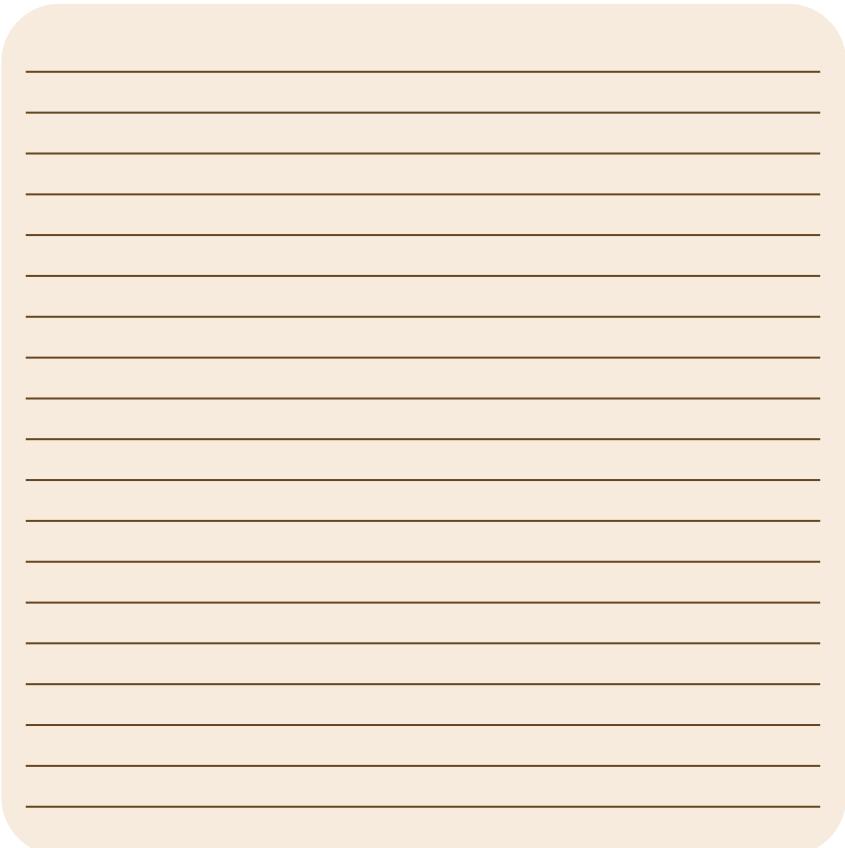
2nd John

EVERY WEEK:

1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



15 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 10
3rd John

Background OF 3RD JOHN

GENRE:	Letters
AUTHOR:	John, The Apostle <i>Same author as 1st & 2nd John, the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation.</i>
RECIPIENTS:	Gaius, a faithful follower of Christ <i>He was a member of one of the churches in the same network of local house churches that 1st and 2nd John was written to.</i>
DATE WRITTEN:	Estimated to have been written between AD 85 and AD 90 <i>The same timeframe that 1st John and 2nd John were written in.</i>
PURPOSE:	→ To commend him for his hospitality to the traveling Christians and encourage him to continue regardless of the pressure to do the opposite

3rd John

ESV

Greeting

1 The elder to the beloved
Gaius, whom I love in truth.

2 Beloved, I pray that all may
go well with you and that you
may be in good health, as it
goes well with your soul. 3 For
I rejoiced greatly when the
brothers came and testified to
your truth, as indeed you are
walking in the truth. 4 I have
no greater joy than to hear that
my children are walking in the
truth.

Support and Opposition

5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing
you do in all your efforts for
these brothers, strangers as they

NLT

Greetings

1 This letter is from John, the
elder.

I am writing to Gaius, my dear
friend, whom I love in the
truth.

2 Dear friend, I hope all is
well with you and that you are
as healthy in body as you are
strong in spirit. 3 Some of the
traveling teachers recently
returned and made me very
happy by telling me about your
faithfulness and that you are
living according to the truth. 4
I could have no greater joy
than to hear that my children
are following the truth.

3rd John

ESV

are, 6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. 7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

9 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. 10 So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses

NLT

Caring for the Lord's Workers
5 Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God. 7 For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. 8 So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.

9 I wrote to the church about

3rd John

ESV

to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God, whoever does evil has not seen God. 12

Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

Final Greetings

13 I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk

NLT

this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us. 10

When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.

11 Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil

3rd John

ESV

face to face.

15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

NLT

prove that they do not know God.

12 Everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, as does the truth itself. We ourselves can say the same for him, and you know we speak the truth.

Conclusion

13 I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to write it with pen and ink. 14 For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face.

15 Peace be with you.

Your friends here send you their greetings. Please give my personal greetings to each of our friends there.

3rd John

OBSERVATION:

Read through 3rd John (printed in ESV and NLT translations on Pages 144 to 147)

1. Highlight (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any repeated words or phrases in the chapter. These show the author's emphasis on a point.

2. Circle where there are linking words or phrases in the ESV text (e.g. because, but, therefore, so that, since) and write down (below) the sentence that follows them. These show connections between ideas the author is communicating.

3. Underline (in the ESV text) and write down (below) any imagery, contrasts and similarities that John uses in his descriptions.

3rd John

INTERPRETATION:

Read verses 1 to 8

4. Who does John say Gaius is being faithful to when he cares for the travelling believers?

5. What work were the travelling believers doing?

6. Compare John's instructions in 3 John 5-8 with his instructions in 2 John 10-11 (NLT version). What differences do you see? and in both scenarios what role does John say the believers take on when they provide support?

7. What role did hospitality play in the spread of the gospel in the first century? and what role do you think it plays today?

3rd John

Read verses 9 to 14

8. What does John identify as the motivation behind Diotrephes' behaviour?

9. By being driven by this motivation, who/what is Diotrephes actually serving? Read Rom 16:17-18. .

10. Did Diotrephes qualify to be a leader in the church? Why or why not? Read 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11.

11. Do the qualifications outlined in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11 focus on character, special abilities/gifts, or special anointing?

12. Look up the definitions for the following words:

a. Imitate (used in the ESV version)

3rd John

b. Influence (used in the NLT version)

13. Why do you think Diotrephes managed to have influence with some people in the church?

14. Read Paul's account in Gal 2:11-14 of an incident in which Peter and others were influenced by bad examples. What made Peter hypocritically go along with the 'circumcision party'? & what made other Jewish believers (including Barnabas) go astray as well?

Read verse 15

15. We know that all scripture is inspired by God and useful to us (2 Tim 3:16-17). What is the value in us reading personal greetings, as well as the names and commendations of people like Demetrius (who likely carried this letter to Gaius) and others who are named in various letters in the Bible and played similar roles in the early church (Rom 16:1-15, Col 4:7-18 etc)?

3rd John

APPLICATION:

16. Think of christian leaders who have great influence on you (whether in your church, or online etc) and list them below. What reasons made you consider them a leader (their character, gifts, or 'special anointing')? Do those reasons align with the Biblical qualifications for a leader in the church?
-
-
-
-

17. Are there people you considered leaders but now realise that either they don't qualify, or that you actually don't have the proximity to them to know whether they do?
-
-
-
-

3rd John

18. Sometimes we follow ungodly leaders/influences out of fear. Read Prov 29:25, Isaiah 51:7-8, Isaiah 51:12-13, Heb 13:5-6 & Psalm 118:4-9 and write down truths about God to keep in mind to fight against the fear of man (e.g. *The Lord will never leave me nor forsake me*).
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19. Write down a prayer for help to fear God above all; for the wisdom to recognise the leaders he appoints in your life, versus the self-appointed leaders; and for help to live a hospitable life from a love for God and his gospel.
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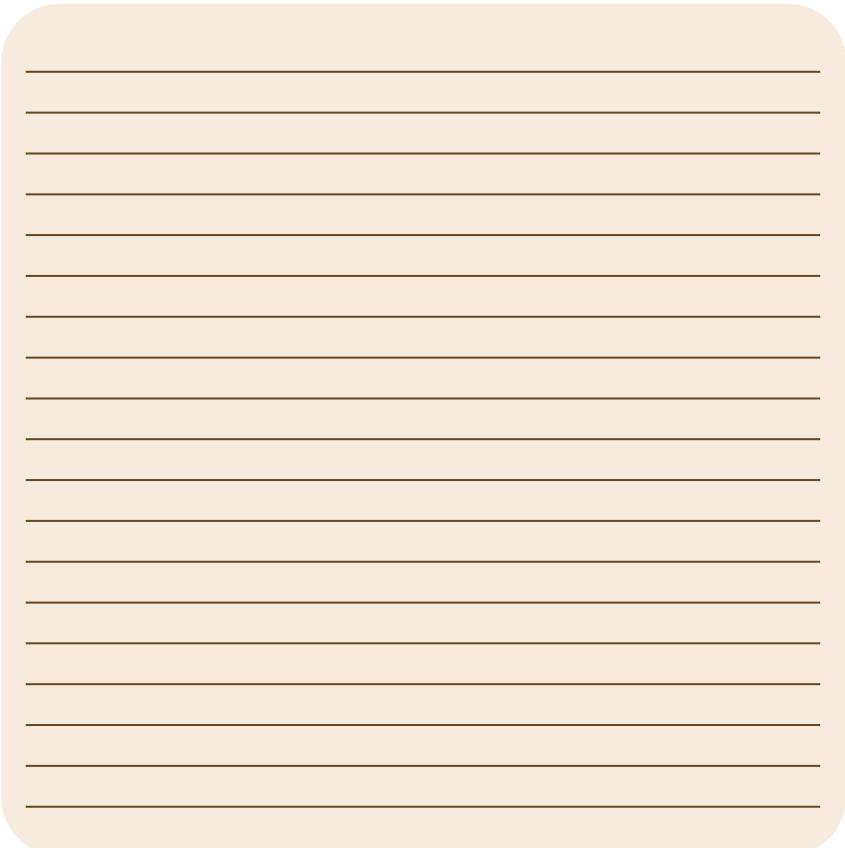
3rd John

EVERY WEEK:

1. Which verse stood out most to you this week? Write it down, memorise it and share it with the group.

2. What about God stood out most to you this week? How does that characteristic encourage you to trust him with your life?

Notes from the audio



12 horizontal lines for writing notes.



Week 11
Round off

Round off

REFLECTION ON THE LETTERS OF JOHN

1. From doing this study did you learn or experience anything new about why or how to study the Bible?

2. What stands out most in your mind from the Letters of John after completing this study? Any particular themes or verses.

3. What about God stands out to you most as you reflect back on the Letters of John?

4. Did studying the Letters of John strengthen your trust in God? If so, in which ways?

Round off

REFLECTION ON THE LETTERS OF JOHN

5. Has studying the Letters of John given you any more clarity on what it means to be a true follower of Christ?

6. Did studying the Letters of John have any impact on how you view your relationship with other believers?

7. Has studying the Letters of John given you any more clarity on how to identify false teachers?

8. While studying the Letters of John, did you feel convicted of any particular sin or realise any changes you need to make in your life?

Round off

REFLECTION ON THE LETTERS OF JOHN

CLOSING PRAYER:

Based on the things you've discussed that stood out to you from the weeks you spent doing this study, write down a prayer for yourself and for each of the people you've done this study with.

Thank You!

Thank you for choosing to do this study! I hope and pray that it has blessed you!

A special thanks to the many people who helped me work on this study—whether they knew it or not:

- Thank you to the initial group at Sojourn Church, for whom this study was first written, and most especially to:

Aunt Edith – Your commitment to community is so inspiring. Rain or shine I knew you'd show up (and early). Your reliability kept me accountable to prepare the questions every week. Thank you.

Maike – Thank you for your enthusiastic participation; your energy was infectious. Hearing you share about the joy and refreshment the group sessions brought into your life was also so encouraging. It reminded me that these studies are worthwhile.

Rhionah – Thank you for continuously encouraging me to actually publish this study. Hearing how it impacted you gave me conviction that it could be impactful for others too.

- Thank you Jess, for your early edits.
- Thank you Randi, Blanche, Tona, Diana, Rosanna, and Kutchi, for choosing this study for your group to do. It gave me the much needed deadline to finish editing it—and getting to attend your final session was such a blessing.
- Thank you Josh, for all your edits throughout. Thank you also for all your support and partnership in doing the audios (and in life)—both are far more enjoyable with you.

Above all, thank you Lord—for the gift of your Word, for the privilege of getting to share it in this way, and for your provision in all the many ways that made this study possible.

Almost 2000 years ago, John wrote to the network of churches he was overseeing about issues of their day... which, it turns out, are also issues of our day.

He wrote to Christians being misled by false teachers, to remind them of the truth and equip them to recognise the lies. In doing so, he answers big questions we too wrestle with today - *What does it really look like to be a genuine follower of Christ? How can I tell if the teachings I'm listening to are false?*

The goal of this Bible study is to help you:

- Grow in clarity about who God is and what it really looks like to follow him
- Grow in your love for God and his ways
- Grow in your ability to recognise false teaching and false teachers

This study is also designed to help you to not only study the Letters of John, but also learn how to study the Bible in general.

BINDI KIREGU became a Christian in 2009 and instantly fell in love with the Bible (for all the reasons she shares in Week 1 of this study). She started writing Bible studies because she loves to see others fall in love with the Bible too.

She originally wrote this study for a group at her church, Sojourn Church in Kampala, which she attends with her husband and 3 little children.

Vocationally, Bindi works in construction, doing projects through the Design-and-Build company she runs with her husband.

