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## In This Is Love

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# In This Is Love

## Lesson One: 1 John 1:1-10

### The Word of Life

*Koiné Greek doesn't have exclamation points (nor does it have any kind of punctuation, for that matter), but John's description of his interaction with Jesus carries with it the impact of the apostle jumping up and down and shouting. John heard Jesus, saw Jesus, visually examined Jesus, and touched Jesus. His point is that Jesus isn't some kind of myth or fairy tale. Jesus is real, and John is an eyewitness, and ear-witness, and even a hand-witness to that reality.*

*In the first century, John's words functioned as rebuttal to the movement that in about a hundred years would become full-blown Gnosticism. Gnostics believed that the material world was inherently evil and corrupt, so they concluded that someone*

*as righteous as Jesus could not have come in the flesh. Instead, He was an apparition, having the semblance of humanity, but not actually being human.*

*John's insistence on the flesh-and-blood nature of the Son of Man refutes this conception of Jesus and exposes the flaws of Gnosticism in general.*

*Even today, though, John's insistence on his personal experience is invaluable to our faith. None of us have seen the Christ, but John did. On the basis of his personal knowledge, he concluded that Jesus was the Son of God. On the basis of such powerful firsthand testimony, it is reasonable for us to reach the same conclusion.*

6. 1 John 4:1-12

7. 1 John 4:13-5:5

8. 1 John 5:6-20

9. 2 John

10. 3 John

11. Jude 1-13

12. Jude 14-25

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## Lesson Thirteen Review

*For each of the passages of Scripture listed below, describe its main point(s) and its relevance to us.*

1. 1 John 1:1-10
2. 1 John 2:1-14
3. 1 John 2:15-29
4. 1 John 3:1-12
5. 1 John 3:13-24

## In This Is Love: Lesson One

1. Compare 1 John 1:1 with John 1:1. What similarities appear? What differences? What does this show us?
2. What four experiences of the Word does 1 John 1:1 list? What does this show about the value of what John says about Jesus? Why is this significant?
3. According to 1:2, what happened to the life? What was John's reaction to this? Why is this important to our faith?
4. In 1:3, how does John describe the goal of this process? What does he say about himself and those like him? What does this tell us about the connection between truth and fellowship?

## In This Is Love: Lesson One

5. How does John describe his personal goal in 1:4? Why would his actions result in that goal? How can we learn to possess his attitude ourselves?
  
6. According to 1:5, what is the source of John's message? What does he do with the message? What is the content of the message? What does this mean? Why is it important?
  
7. What if-statement does John discuss in 1:6? What kind of behavior is he talking about? What does he say is true if these two things occur together? What does this teach us?
  
8. What if-statement does he discuss in 1:7? What is the standard by which we are to judge "walking in the light"? What does this standard mean for us practically?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Twelve

9. What behavior does Jude encourage in 21? What is his audience supposed to wait for? What should these things look like in us?
  
10. What three courses of action does Jude recommend in 22-23? How can his audience tell which course of action is appropriate in a particular circumstance? What does this show us today?
  
11. In 24, what two things does Jude say God is able to do? How does He do these things for us? What result will they have? What does this teach us?
  
12. According to 25, what does Jude desire for God? Through whom is this possible? How long will it last? How should having the same desire transform our lives?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Twelve

5. What does Jude encourage his audience to do in 17? What can we learn from his call to remember, not to listen? Why is this important?
  
6. In 18, what does Jude quote the apostles as saying? Is this still true today? Does this quotation appear exactly anywhere else in the New Testament? Do its sentiments appear anywhere else? What does this teach us about revelation in the first century?
  
7. According to 19, what effect do these scoffers have? How does Jude describe them? What does this teach us about division today?
  
8. In 20, what two activities does Jude say Christians are engaged in? What are these things? What can we learn from this text today?

## In This Is Love: Lesson One

9. Still in 1:7, what two results stem from walking in the light? Why would these two results naturally follow? What does this teach us about walking in the light?
  
10. What if-statement do we see in 1:8? What two results does it produce? Can this be a trap for us today? If so, what must we do to avoid it?
  
11. What if-statement appears in 1:9? What two things result from this if-statement? What adjectives are used to describe God in this verse? Why would these attributes of God lead to the results the verse describes?
  
12. What last if-statement (in this chapter, at least) do we read in 1:10? What two things does it lead to? Why would it produce these results? What does this teach us about the attitude we need to have as Christians?

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## Lesson Two: 1 John 2:1-14

### “I Am Writing”

*As human beings, we are uncomfortable with the tension between two equally true opposites. We don't like having to find the middle ground; we would much rather insist that one thing is completely true and its counterpart, completely false.*

*However, the Bible often confronts us with precisely the kind of paradoxes we would prefer not to face. Is God perfectly just or perfectly merciful? Both! When Jesus was on earth, was He God or man? Both!*

*1 John 2:1 encapsulates an even more significant paradox. John wrote the epistle so that his audience would not sin, yet God provided Jesus to be our advocate when we inevitably do. So which is it? Is being a Christian*

*about righteous living, or is it about trusting in the grace that Jesus provides? This faith vs. works debate has raged for centuries. Some denominations emphasize the significance of works of merit, while others deny that works have anything to do with salvation.*

*In reality, however, the answer to this paradox is once again an emphatic “Both!” We must dedicate ourselves to obedience, yet we must also look to Jesus to plead our case before God when we disobey. Whenever we emphasize one of these over the other, we inevitably do violence to the Scripture and endanger our salvation. We must be disciples on Jesus' terms, not on our own.*

1. According to Jude 14, who is the source of the following quotation? Where does this quotation come from? Why does this present a difficulty for us? How can we resolve it?
2. In the second part of 14, what event is described? Does this sound like anything else in Scripture? Why is this significant?
3. What two reasons does 15 give for the Lord's coming? Of what two things will he convict the ungodly? How does this help us understand the nature of the day of judgment?
4. In 16, what four descriptions does Jude apply to “these people”? What two things do they do? Are these problems still common today? What do we need to do about it?

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## Lesson Twelve: Jude 14-25 Kept in God's Love

*At one time or another, just about all of us face the temptation to convert Christianity into a mechanistic, one-size-fits-all faith, in which everything has been decided and nothing is left to our judgment. The Bible says, "Be modest"; we say, "Hemlines can be no higher than X inches above the floor, and necklines can be no more than Y inches deep." The Bible says, "Glorify God in your body"; we say, "Being fat is a sin."*

*Christians who like to think in this way often find it frustrating when the Bible speaks in principles, without any concrete details they can nail down (or nail others too). However, these broad Scriptural statements of principle reflect God's intent, not His failure to specify. He gives us*

*broad guidelines in areas where there is no one right answer to every possible scenario, and He expects us to use our wisdom and judgment to apply His principles properly.*

*This way of thinking is quite evident in Jude 22-23. Apparently, a number of brethren in Jude's audience had fallen prey to false teachers, and there was no one right way to deal with those misguided Christians. Some would respond best to gentle treatment, some needed to be snatched out of error, and some were so dangerous that they would defile anything they touched. Whether we are dealing with false doctrine or some other problem, we must remember to use the flexibility God gives us to glorify Him.*

1. In 1 John 2:1, how does John describe his purpose in writing? What do Christians have if they sin anyway? What does this mean? How do his words illustrate the balance we must strike in our attitude toward serving God?
2. How is Jesus described in 2:2? What does this mean? Whose sins can He affect? What does this teach us about God's offer of salvation?
3. What if-statement appears in 2:3? What does it show? What contrasting statement appears in 2:4? What does it show? Why is this spiritually significant?
4. What class of people does John present in 2:5? What is true of such people? What consequence does it have? How does all of this logically fit together?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Two

5. What statement does John make in 2:6? Why is this logically true? What does it reveal about our walk with God?
6. In 2:7, what does John say he is not doing? What does he say he is doing? What is the old commandment? How should we understand all this?
7. What does John say he is doing in 2:8? What does he reveal about the new commandment? According to him, why is this true? What does all this mean? How do we reconcile it with 2:7?
8. What person does John describe in 2:9? What is true of him? Whom does he describe in 2:10? What is true of him? What does this reveal about the importance of love? How should we put this into practice?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Eleven

9. According to 10, what contrasting thing do “these people” do? What results from this? Can this be a problem today? If so, how?
10. What does Jude say about them in 11? Why? What do we learn from Jude’s introduction of these historical events? How can we avoid falling into the traps Jude outlines here?
11. In 12, what four descriptions does Jude apply to these people? What do these descriptions show? What does such dramatic language teach us?
12. What two further descriptions appear in 13? What do these things mean? What portrait do they paint of the individuals in question?



## In This Is Love: Lesson Eleven

5. Who is the subject of 6? What did they do? What happened to them? What spiritual principle does this highlight?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What group does Jude bring up in 7? Does Jude say they sinned by violating God's law on hospitality? If not, what does he say their problem was? What happened to them? Why is this important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In 8, what does Jude say "these people" are doing? Why are they doing these things? What basic spiritual problem does this highlight?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Who is introduced in 9? What is his situation? What does he do in this situation? What doesn't he do? What's the lesson here for us?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Two

9. Whom does John describe in 2:11? What three things are true of him? Why would they be true? In practical terms, what does this mean for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. In 2:12, to whom is John writing? Why? Why would this fact be a motivation for his writing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What three groups does John address in 2:13? What three reasons does he give for this? How does each reason relate to each group?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Whom does John address in 2:14? How does he explain his reasons? Does this passage appear similar to 2:13 in any ways? If so, why does John repeat himself?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Three: 1 John 2:15-29

### The World and the Christ

*In 1 John 2:17, John writes, “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” If there is any truth in the Bible that modern America doesn’t want to think about, it’s this one. Our society very, very badly wants to believe that life on earth is eternal and eternally good. Despite its centrality to human existence, death is a taboo topic, rarely if ever discussed. Men and women who are now eligible to join AARP pretend, and even sometimes behave, as though they were still romping in the mud at Woodstock.*

*They cling to this delusion because otherwise they must acknowledge that a life built around the joys of this world is a*

*life built on futility and folly. There are many pleasant things under the sun, but sooner or later, all of them pass, as do we ourselves. This is one of the core truths of human existence, and it won’t go away simply because we ignore it.*

*There are two possible responses to the transience of our earthly lives. The first is to live a life of gloom and despair, fearfully awaiting the end of everything that we love. The second is to do the will of God. We can’t make ourselves live forever, but God can, in an eternity that is far better than the best times on earth can be. If we truly want to safeguard our lives, we must entrust those lives to Him.*

1. In Jude 1, how does Jude describe himself? Whose brother does this most likely also make him? To whom is he writing? According to 2, what does he want for them? What can we learn from this greeting?
2. According to 3, what did Jude want to do? What did he do instead? Why? What are the implications of “once for all”? Why is this significant?
3. According to 4, what have “certain people” done? How does Jude describe these people? What does it mean that they were “long ago designated for condemnation”? What do we learn from this today?
4. In 5, how does Jude describe his purpose? What might have made this unnecessary? What does this teach us? What event does this verse describe? Why is this doctrinally important?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Eleven: Jude 1-13 Contending for the Faith

*In the rather small and inconspicuous book of Jude, there's only one passage that gets a whole lot of play from the pulpit: Jude 3. Almost in passing, Jude describes the Christian system of faith in a way that has inspired Christian primitivists for centuries. He notes that the faith was "once for all delivered to the saints."*

*"Once for all"—those three words carry a mountain of doctrinal weight. The idea that we should study the Bible and seek to return to the pattern of the first-century church is founded on the assumption that there is no such thing as continuing revelation. If there is, if God continues to reveal His inspired will to man today, the Scripture is no more valid a source of spiritual author-*

*ity than the pronouncements of a denominational bishop or the utterances of a charismatic preacher. Indeed, if those modern-day "revelations" are valid at all, in the areas where they contradict the Bible, it would be reasonable for us to presume that they have superseded it.*

*"Once for all", however, tells us that such a thing is impossible. The faith was delivered once, once for all people, once for all time. Indeed, it had already been delivered at the time of Jude's writing. No one in the future had any reason to look for additional revelation. It is from God's word alone, then, that we can learn everything we need to know in order to inherit eternal life.*

1. What command does John give in 1 John 2:15? What are the consequences of disobedience? Why is this so dangerous for Christians?
2. What three things does 2:16 list as being "in the world"? How are these three things defined? What are some examples of each? According to the text, where are they not from?"
3. According to 2:17, what happens to the world and its lusts? What happens to those who do the will of God? How does this lend perspective to our existence?
4. What time does John say it is in 2:18? What does this mean? How does he support this assertion?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Three

5. In 2:19, what does John say the antichrists do? Why? What would have happened if the opposite were true? What does this teach us?
6. According to 2:20, what gives knowledge? What does this mean? In 2:21, why does John say he has not written? Why does he say he has written? What can we learn from this?
7. According to 2:22, who is the liar? Whom does the antichrist deny? How does 2:23 explain this assertion? Are there antichrists today? If so, who? Why is this significant?
8. What does John instruct us to do in 2:24? What result will this have? How does this emphasize the connection between the word and having a relationship with God?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Ten

9. What does John encourage in 11? How does he explain himself? What does this mean?
10. Who is the subject of 12? What does John say about him? What is the testimony from the truth? What does John do in addition? What does this show us?
11. According to 13, what does John have to say? What does he not want to do? According to 14, what does he want to do instead? What's the lesson here for us?
12. In 15, what blessing does John impart? What else does he reveal? What does he encourage? What does this show us about the first-century church?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Ten

5. According to 6, how have these strangers reacted? What does John encourage Gaius to do? What does this teach us about whom we're really helping when we help brethren?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In 7, what does John say the strangers did? What didn't they do? What does he advise as a consequence in 8? Why? What does this teach us about the spiritual effect of helping workers for the Lord?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What does John say he has done in 9? What problem emerged? Why? What warning against pride does this offer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. In 10, what does John say he will do if he comes? What other criticisms does he offer about Diotrephes' conduct? What can we learn from Diotrephes here? What can we learn from John?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Three

9. According to 2:25, what promise do we have from God? In 2:26, what opposite warning does John offer? What does this teach us? How should we apply it today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. According to 2:27, what is true of the anointing? What result does it have? Why? How is this not true for us today? How is it true?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What instruction does John give us in 2:28? Why? How should this reminder influence our conduct?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What if-statement does John make in 2:29? What result does it have? Why is this true? How should this change the way we think?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Four: 1 John 3:1-12 Practicing Righteousness

*1 John 3:7 isn't one of the headliner passages in the epistle, but it is much more meaningful than it appears at first. Our initial impression is that it's kind of a duh passage: "Well, of COURSE only people who practice righteousness are righteous!" Upon closer inspection, however, the passage becomes much more significant.*

*After all, one of the prevailing religious impressions in modern American society is that you DON'T have to practice righteousness to be righteous. To people like this, outside the Lord's church and even within it, grace is all that matters. They believe that this grace applies even to the so-called Christian who dedicates his life to the practice of willful sin. Divorce and unscriptural remarriage are*

*perfectly fine, as long as you're willing to regret what happened and put it (and your lawful spouse) behind you. Unabashed greed and materialism are perfectly acceptable, as long as God gets His cut when the plate is passed on Sunday morning. People flock to churches where such things are tolerated, precisely because they desire a veneer of righteousness without having to change their lives.*

*In reality, only the one who practices righteousness is righteous. Only the one who dedicates his life to God, in word and action alike, can hope to please Him. If we believe that we can skate by on the basis of assembly lip service, we could not be more mistaken.*

## In This Is Love: Lesson Ten

1. According to 3 John 1, to whom is the epistle addressed? How does John feel about him? What wish does he express? How does John say he is doing spiritually? What should we take from this?
2. What does John say he is doing in 3? Why? How does he describe Gaius' overall conduct? What does it mean for us to walk in the truth?
3. What does John say about himself in 4? What does this reveal about him as a person? How can we adopt this attitude for ourselves?
4. In 5, what does Gaius appear to be doing? What is his relationship to these people? How does John describe his conduct? What does this teach us about Christian hospitality?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Ten: 3 John Doers of Good and Evil

*I have a bad habit of joking that, in the extremely unlikely event that I were to acquire a race-horse, I would name the horse Diotrephes. What better name for a horse than that of a man who “loves to be first among them”? However, this marginally amusing description shouldn’t blind us to the deadly spiritual problem that it describes. Diotrephes’ lust for power didn’t merely endanger his own soul; it put the souls of the entire congregation at risk.*

*This is an easy trap for leaders in the Lord’s church today to fall into, all the more so because it begins with the desire to do good. It is good to want to be a leader. It is good to seek to encourage others in their obedience to God. However, if we*

*aren’t careful, bit by bit, our focus can shift from doing what God wants to doing what we want. We judge the church according to our wisdom rather than according to the word, determine on our own how it could be improved, and do everything we can to ramrod our view through, even at the cost of driving other Christians away.*

*When we face this temptation, we must remember that the purpose of the church is not to serve as a vehicle for our ambitions. It exists to glorify God by exhorting others to serve Him and remaining obedient to His will. When we seek His glory, our glory is forgotten. When we seek our glory, it is His that we abandon.*

## In This Is Love: Lesson Four

1. According to 1 John 3:1, how does the Father’s love reveal itself? What’s the reality here? What effect does this have on the world? Why? What should this tell us about how different Christians should be?
2. According to 3:2, what are we now? Do we have certain knowledge of our future state? What will we be like? Why? What should we learn from this?
3. What hope is 3:3 talking about? What is its result? Why? Why does this make sense? How should this practically appear in our lives?
4. According to 3:4, what is true of the one who practices sin? Why? What does the idea of “lawlessness” mean? What does this tell us about what we’re really doing when we practice sin?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Four

5. How does 3:5 describe Jesus' purpose? What else is true of Him? What does this imply about us as His disciples?
  
6. According to 3:6, what is true of the one who abides in Jesus? What is true of the one who sins? What does this mean? What does this teach us about ourselves?
  
7. What warning does John give in 3:7? What does he reveal about righteousness? How does this relate to Jesus? What should the practice of righteousness look like in us?
  
8. According to 3:8, what is the origin of one who practices sin? Why? What contrary purpose does Jesus have? Is this a useful warning against self-deception? If so, why?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Nine

9. What does the person described in the first part of 9 do? What does he not do? What is the result of this conduct? In context, what is "the teaching of Christ"? Why is this important?
  
10. What does the person who appears in the second part of 9 do? What outcome does this have? What does this teach us about the importance of Jesus?
  
11. What situation is John considering in 10? What does he say his audience must not do in that situation? In 11, how does he explain his stance? What should we learn from this today?
  
12. In 12, what does John say he doesn't want to do? What does he want to do instead? Why? What greeting does he offer in 13? What is this talking about?



## In This Is Love: Lesson Nine

5. What is John doing in 5? What is he not doing? Why does he emphasize this point over and over again?
6. In 6, how does John define love? What are we supposed to do about it? Why is this important?
7. What does John say happened in 7? What is the content of their deception? What does that make such people? What does this tell us about the spiritual struggles of John's day?
8. What admonition does John offer in 8? What will happen if we ignore it? What will happen if we listen to it? Why is this warning always relevant?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Four

9. According to 3:9, what is true of those who are born of God? Why? What does this mean? What does it reveal about our struggles with sin?
10. According to 3:10, how obvious is the difference between children of God and children of the devil? How can we make the distinction? What specific things should we be doing to be obvious children of God?
11. In 3:11, what is John repeating? What is it? How fundamental is this idea to Christianity? What does it mean for us to practice it?
12. What bad example makes an appearance in 3:12? What did he do? Why? What problem for us should this warn us against?

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## Lesson Five: 1 John 3:13-24

### By This We Know Love

*In all the wide world of religious discussion, there is probably no word that is more misunderstood and misapplied than the word "love". According to the misappliers, the love we share with God consists of a vague, content-free affection, completely divorced from what we actually do with our days. As long as He senses the warm fuzzies emanating from us, He doesn't care about what we do. Similarly, we show our love for others by doing "nice" things that make both of us happy, regardless of whether the "nice" things violate the law of Christ or not.*

*This definition of love as a kind of warm complacency may fit the gospel of tolerance, but it has nothing to do with the gospel of Christ. As 1 John 3:16 reveals,*

*the Biblical definition of love is Jesus dying on the cross. That changes things. It tells us that love means obeying God, in everything, no matter what, even to the point of death. Love means sacrificing ourselves for the sake of others. Love means courage, determination, and suffering. Far from being content-free, Biblical love is the most powerful thought ever written. It demands nothing less than a total transformation of who we are.*

*The love of the Bible is never going to be popular among men, simply because it does demand so much. However, that call is a call that we must heed if we want to be genuine disciples of Christ.*

## In This Is Love: Lesson Nine

1. In 2 John 1, how is the epistle addressed? What does he say about them? What is he talking about? Why is he using this language?
2. According to 2, why do John and all who know the truth love them? What does he reveal about this truth? What does this teach us about the foundation of Christian love?
3. In 3, what three blessings does John promise? From whom will they come? How? Why should Christians always expect to share in these blessings?
4. In 4, how does John describe his behavior? Why did he do this? Why were the children behaving in this way? What does this tell us about the connection between having a relationship with God and obeying Him?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Nine: 2 John Walking in the Truth

*We live in a society in which the highest value is tolerance, and about the worst faux pas one can commit is to be intolerant. The world around us assumes that there is no absolute truth, that two differing religious viewpoints are equally valid, and that nobody has the right to tell anybody else what to do, even if they're quoting Scripture.*

*As was probably inevitable, Christians have been affected and influenced by this mania for tolerance. This is not entirely a bad thing. It's every bit as dangerous to assert that we have the truth without fully considering the evidence first as it is to assert that truth cannot be discovered in God's word at all. Conversely, it is good for us to continually test our beliefs*

*against the standard of the word, rather than assuming we know all the answers already.*

*However, we must also follow the example of the apostle John in 2 John. When he encountered the false doctrine that Jesus had not come in the flesh, he unhesitatingly condemned it as false, warned that the false doctrine separated its adherents from the Father too, and forbade genuine Christians to associate with those who held to the untruth.*

*Today, we must not shy away from similarly strong words and strong actions when we encounter false doctrine. Our responsibility to speak the truth in love does not make us any less responsible for defending the truth in the first place.*

1. What warning does John issue in 1 John 3:13? Is this true for us? If it is true, do we find it surprising? If it isn't true, why isn't it true?
2. According to 3:14, what do we know? How do we know it? What is the alternative? What does this teach us about our salvation?
3. How does 3:15 explain 3:14? Does this strike us as an extreme statement for John to make? Why is it true anyway? What does it mean for us?
4. According to 3:16, what defines love? What should our response to that love be? In real life, what does this mean we should be doing?



## In This Is Love: Lesson Eight

5. What other testimony appears in 5:11? In 5:12, what logical conclusion does John draw from this? How does this emphasize the importance of being in Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. According to 5:13, to whom is John writing? Why? What should we draw from this today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In 5:14, what does John say our confidence in Christ is? According to 5:15, if this is true, what else is true? In practice, what does this mean?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What situation does 5:16 describe? What should “anyone” do in this situation? What will the result be? What exception applies? What is all this talking about?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Five

9. What if-statement appears in 3:21? What result does this have? Is this a bad result or a good result? What does it teach us about the confidence we ought to have in Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What does John say will happen in 3:22? Why? What does this mean? Hebrews 11:6 may help you answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. According to 1 John 3:23, what are the commandments? Does this list seem a little sparse? Why isn't it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. In 3:24, what does John present as the result of obedience? What does this mean? How can Christians know this is true? How does this work for us today?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Six: 1 John 4:1-12 Knowing God

*Proof-texting is one of the most dangerous methods of Bible study in existence. When we use a passage to make a point without considering its context, we are as likely to be wrong as right. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the writing of John. Even though his short, simple statements appear to lend themselves to proof-texting, his thoughts are so intertwined that if we miss the context, we miss the point.*

*For instance, take John's statement in 1 John 4:7 that anyone who loves is born of God and knows God. If we ignore the context, we can use that statement to demolish some of the most important doctrines in the Bible. No more baptism for forgiveness of sins! No more concern for Biblical authority! As*

*long as X does things that I consider loving, I can deem him a Christian and call him brother.*

*Of course, John ALSO says, not once but repeatedly, that love is keeping the commandments of God. That puts a whole different spin on things. All of a sudden, we learn that the guy who does nice things for others but doesn't obey the Scripture actually isn't loving. The things that he does that look loving are coincidence, not righteousness. Likewise, John's statement that people who love (meaning people who obey from the heart) know God and are born of God goes from radical to unremarkable. Love is central to Christianity, yes, but it cannot be detached from obedience.*

## In This Is Love: Lesson Eight

1. According to 1 John 5:6, how did Jesus come? What third element does the verse add? What did it do? Why? What is all this talking about?
2. What does 5:7 in your Bible say? Do different translations say different things? Why? According to 5:8, what three are testifying? To what are they testifying? Why is this important?
3. What if-statement appears in 5:9? Is this true of us? What logical point does John next raise? How does he explain the relevance of this point? Is this still relevant today? Why?
4. What does 5:10 reveal about believers? What is this talking about? What, by contrast, is the effect of unbelief? Why? How does this define what it means to believe?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Eight: 1 John 5:6-21 That You May Know

*The word of God is perfect. However, because it is transmitted through the agency of fallible men, it is not necessarily perfectly handed down. One of the best examples of this is 1 John 5:7. In the 1611 King James Bible, this verse reads, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Most modern translations, by contrast, omit this statement.*

*The King James version of 1 John 5:7 first appeared in a scholarly Greek New Testament prepared by Desiderus Erasmus in 1522. However, the only Greek textual support for the verse came from a manuscript that itself dated from the sixteenth century. The translators of the King James Bible relied heavily on Erasmus'*

*text, but since that time, not a single manuscript confirming its reading of 1 John 5:7 has been found. As a result, modern scholars almost unanimously reject Erasmus' reading.*

*This has two implications for us today. First, we must recognize that not every manuscript of the Bible agrees with every other manuscript. As a consequence of that, scholars debate whether some passages that appeared in the King James Bible were part of the original manuscripts at all. Second, and more importantly, even if we reject every one of those debatable passages, the teaching of the word does not change in any meaningful way. What we have today is still the same soul-saving gospel that God inspired.*

1. According to 1 John 4:1, what are we not supposed to do? What should we do instead? Why? How should we practice this today?
2. How does 4:2 say we can know whether a spirit is from God? Does this mean that anyone who confesses Jesus and claims to have a miraculous spiritual gift is correct? Why or why not?
3. What alternative to 4:2 does 4:3 propose? What does John say the other spirits actually are? What is he talking about?
4. What does John say has happened in 4:4? Why has this happened? How should this encourage us today?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Six

5. According to 4:5, what is the origin of the antichrists? What do they do? What happens as a result? Do we still see this today? If so, where?
  
6. By contrast, how does 4:6 describe the origin of the disciples? What two results does their teaching produce? What does this help disciples know? What can we learn from this today?
  
7. What instruction does John give in 4:7? Why? Does this mean that anyone who does something we consider loving is right with God? Why or why not?
  
8. What contrasting statement does John make in 4:8? Why is this true? Why is it significant for us?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Seven

9. According to 5:1, what is true of everyone who believes? How will all who love God react toward such people? What does this mean?
  
10. According to 5:2, what can we know? How can we know it? How do John's words here help clarify the whole context?
  
11. In 5:3, what does John say the love of God is? How does he describe His commandments? Why is this important for us to remember?
  
12. What does 5:4 say happens to all who are born of God? Why? According to 5:5, is this victory possible outside of believing in Jesus? Why is this significant?



## In This Is Love: Lesson Seven

5. According to 4:17, what is the consequence of this reciprocal abiding? What does it give us? Why? How should we apply this in practice?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In 4:18, where does John say there is no fear? What casts it out? Why does this happen? How does all of this fit together logically?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In 4:19, what does John say we do? Why? What person does John present in 4:20? What is true of him? Why? What does this teach us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What command does John repeat in 4:21? What is its source? What does this mean for us practically?

## In This Is Love: Lesson Six

9. According to 4:9, how is love made manifest? Why was this done? What does this reveal to us about God's purpose in sending Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Where does 4:10 say love is not found? Where is love found? How does this illustrate love for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What if-statement does John propose in 4:11? What conclusion does he draw from it? Why is this logically correct?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. According to 4:12, what has no one ever seen? What if-statement does John next propose? What are its two consequences? What does the second part of this verse have to do with the first?

# In This Is Love

## Lesson Seven: 1 John 4:13-5:5 Perfected in Love

*As we have already noted, it's hard for us to walk the middle path of paradox that John lays out for us. However, through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, John also contains a number of passages we can use to check ourselves. 1 John 4:17-18 is such a passage. It tells us that if we understand the love of God as we should, and if we love our brother and our neighbor as we should, we can approach the judgment without fear.*

*However, despite this instruction, many Christians do regard the judgment with fear. Sometimes, this is warranted. If we live a double life that fools our brethren, we do well to remember that it isn't going to fool God. More frequently, though, this*

*fear isn't warranted. I've had Christians tell me they laid awake at night worrying about their souls, when they were almost certainly doing nothing that would justify their terror.*

*This points to a misunderstanding of God's expectations. When John speaks of perfect love, he doesn't mean that we do a perfect job of obeying everything the Bible says about love. He means instead that we have come to know God's perfect love, and that His love has perfected us. It's terrifying to think of having to justify ourselves by perfect law-keeping. Despite our best efforts, we don't keep it perfectly. However, we can approach the throne fearlessly, because of our faith in His perfect love.*

## In This Is Love: Lesson Seven

1. According to 1 John 4:13, what can we know? Why can we know it? Does this refer to a feeling, or to something else? Explain your answer.
2. In 4:14, what does John say he has done? What is he doing now? Why is this significant to our faith?
3. What person does 4:15 describe? What does John say is true of him? In context, what does this mean? Why does John say it?
4. According to 4:16, what happened to John? How is God described here? What does the text reveal about the consequences of abiding in love? What should we take from this?