



CHRIST CENTRAL CHURCH

Walking *in the* Truth

Bible Foundations and John's Letters

a study by Christ Central Church

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Note from the Pastor

In the vast tapestry of human literature, no text has left as profound a mark on the hearts and minds of countless people as the Bible. Its pages contain stories of creation, redemption, love, and divine guidance. Among its many treasures, the three epistles written by the Apostle John stand out as beacons of light, offering profound insights into the nature of faith, love, and truth.

In this bible study, you will be invited to walk in the truth that the Lord has prescribed for all humankind, this truth that brings light and life. The Apostle John will help us to see the vertical and horizontal dimensions of walking in the truth. You will see the vertical dimensions of walking with Christ, our advocate. You will also see the horizontal dimensions of walking with your brothers and sisters in Christ with divine affection. All of this is preserved by the truth of the Gospel.

As you embark on this journey of Bible study, delving into the profound insights of the Apostle John's epistles, you are invited to explore themes that resonate across the ages: the nature of God's love, the significance of fellowship, the power of truth, and the importance of discerning between light and darkness. John's writings, characterized by their simple yet profound language, beckon us to reflect on our own spiritual journey and the ways in which we can more fully align our lives with the teachings of Christ.

In the coming months of this Bible study, you will navigate the intricate passages of John's epistles, drawing connections between his words and the challenges and opportunities of our lives today. You will also take time at the beginning of the study to explore the foundations of the Bible's story as well as gain principles for interpreting the Bible. We trust that this will enrich your capacity for biblical literacy as we seek to rightly understand the word of truth and apply it to our lives. May this exploration deepen your connection with God, broaden your understanding of His love, and empower you to embody the transformative truths that have echoed through the ages since these epistles were first written.

May our hearts be receptive, our minds attentive, and our spirits awakened as we embark on this voyage of discovery through the profound wisdom contained within the First, Second, and Third Epistles of John.

Pastor Evan Marbury

Walking in the Truth: Bible Foundations and John's Letters

There is an allure to truth. Love it or hate it, there is something captivating about it. Our contemporary culture may say truth is beautiful because we each get to determine what truth is—a kind of “truth is in the eye of the beholder” mantra. What is a proper Christian response to this, especially if we struggle with uncertainty? In a cacophony of voices declaring what is truth and questioning if we can know it, the Christian must speak in a clear voice with assurance that we do know the truth. The Christian anchors this assurance in what they have learned from the beginning. Christians must remember the beginning when they first saw the truth of God's beauty, when they first heard the truth of God's love, when they first believed the truth of God's Word.

The letters from John, the beloved disciple and church elder, are a series of exhortations to his audience to walk in the truth that they have known from the beginning. These New Testament letters provide a helpful litmus test for Christians today. What do we know to be true about Jesus Christ and how is that truth evident in our lives?

Before we can walk in the truth, we must be certain we have a solid foundation to walk on. We will lay a foundation that will help us see the beauty of God's word. This study will provide you with the framework to understand the grand narrative that flows through all of Scripture and how to properly interpret the text. These are our Bible Foundations. From there we will study John's letters.

John was grateful to hear the believers were walking in truth. Let's study God's Word so that we know we are walking in truth.

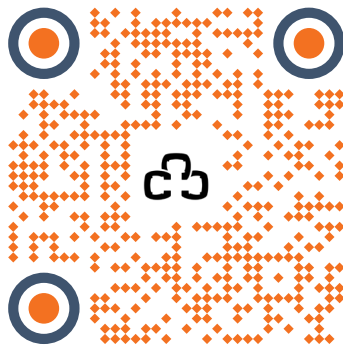
How to use this study:

Start each session in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate the truth of Scripture to you. We will spend two weeks exploring Biblical foundations before we study, roughly, a chapter of John's letters weekly.

Each week, read the passage of Scripture and answer the accompanying questions. You may answer all the questions at once, or break them up over the course of the week. It's up to you. However, to get in the rhythm of reading Scripture repetitively, we ask that you read the assigned passage at least twice before engaging the questions. By the power of the Holy Spirit, getting familiar with the text will deepen your wonder about Scripture, illuminate the truth of the text, and prepare your heart

and mind to know God more. The Application Questions are prompts for reflection and group discussion. The Digging Deeper portion is optional, but available if you desire to explore more connections in the text. And new this year, we added a Group Prayer section. We want to help guide you through praying the Scriptures. Simply follow the bulleted list during the prayer time at the end of your weekly gatherings.

Lastly, there will be a 15-minute podcast teaching to accompany each week of the curriculum. Ideally, this is listened to after you have answered the week's questions and is a supplement to what you have learned in your study time. Access the podcast using the QR code below:



Bible Foundations

Week One

Bible Foundations: The Story of God's Word

Read: As you read these passages, make a note of who is speaking and any mention of the word "word."

Genesis 1

Genesis 3

Genesis 15, 17:1-8, Galatians 3:15-18

John 1

Revelation 19:11-16, 21:1-8

What is the Bible? The Bible is the story of God's Word shared with us in a way that we can understand. It is a story of God's Word as it relates to His kingdom and its King.

What are the details?

- How is the Bible divided?
- How many books?
- How many authors?
- Over how many years?

Define:

Kingdom

What story does the Bible tell?

Act	Kingdom	Word	Scripture

Important qualities about the Bible:

- Inspired
- Free from error and incapable of error
- Clear and has all we need
- Authoritative

The authority of Scripture applied

- Personally
- Relationally

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:1-5

- for God’s Word to be a light in every area of your life
- for greater understanding of God’s story and how you participate in it
- for people you know personally to come to salvation in Jesus

Week 2

Bible Foundations: Biblical Interpretation

Read: Psalm 19, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21

Two horizons:

1.

2.

Define:

Exegesis

Hermeneutics

Personal Exercise:

How to read Scripture:

R

O

A

M

Use 5-fold Kingdom Narrative as Lens

1. Established
2. Lost
3. Foretold
4. Redeemed
5. Restored

How to interpret Scripture

P

R

A

Y

Interpret for Application:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105

- for a deeper understanding of God’s Word
- for a joy in discovering the riches of Scripture
- for opportunities to share with others what we have learned

Fall
John's Letters:
Part One

Introduction to John's Letters

Read: 1,2, & 3 John in one sitting

About the Author

The letters are attributed to John, but his name is not mentioned anywhere in the text. Early church fathers overwhelmingly ascribed the letters to John, and scholars join with Christians over the past two millennia who have accepted John as the author. Apart from Christian tradition and external evidence, there are also internal clues that let us know the author of 1,2, & 3 John is the disciple of Jesus.

1. Consider 1 John 1:1-5 for clues about the author. What do you learn about the author?

About the Recipients

The letters were written around AD 85-90 in the Roman province of Asia around Ephesus. Letters from this time typically had introductory greetings to their recipients (see Ephesians 1 or 1 Peter 1 for an example).

2. Compare the beginning of 1 John to the beginning of 2 John and 3 John. Check the final column if the letter has a traditional greeting. Scan the text for clues as to whom the letters were written.

Book	Recipient	Greeting
1 John		
2 John		
3 John		

3. Write down any words in 1 John that describe who his recipients were.

The lack of formal greeting in 1 John means it was written to be circulated around to different churches. It's called a circular letter. The other two letters are called Greco Roman letters.

Purpose of the Letters

4. Read 1 John 1:4, 1 John 2:1, and 1 John 5:13. What are three of John's goals in writing this letter?

5. Read 2 John 8-10. What is John's instruction to the recipients?

6. Read 3 John 5-8. What do you think John is commending Gaius on?

7. All three letters are related around the same historical situation, and each letter addresses this overarching issue in some way. As we work through our study, this will become clearer to us. For now, read 1 John 2:18-19 and write down what has happened in the churches.

Throughout this study, we will call this group the secessionists. As we read John's letters we will learn more about what they believe. This group caused conflict and confusion within the early church. While these opponents are not the main subject of John's letters, the encouragement he gives his recipients is written in light of them. We will learn how John clears the recipients' confusion and how they are to walk in a manner full of assurance that they are walking in the truth.

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“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.” 1 John 5:13

- for our hearts and minds to be open to receive the truth about Jesus
- for our rest in the certainty of God’s Word
- for our life to reflect the joy and fellowship that comes from being in Christ

Digging Deeper

The language choice and themes between the Gospel of John and the letters of John support his authorship. Read John 1:1-18 and write out the parallels between it and 1 John 1.

1 John 1-2:2

1. Who is “the Word of life” John speaks of in 1 John 1:1?
2. How did John experience Jesus? What was John’s response to witnessing Jesus?
3. The main verb in vv. 1-4 is “proclaim,” found in verse 3. Based on 1 John 1:5, what was John proclaiming?

What does this proclamation give us?

4. The word “fellowship” (Greek: koinonia) is mentioned four times in four verses and is not brought up again in John’s letters. Look up the meaning of fellowship and write a definition in your own words.
 - Who is the fellowship with?
 - Look up John 17:3,20-23. How is John echoing what Jesus prayed in John 17?
 - Considering John’s response to being with the incarnate Jesus, what do you think is a distinctive trait for those who are in fellowship with “the Father and his Son”?

5. Remember, we said John was writing about a group of people who left the fellowship of believers (see 1 John 2:19). We called them secessionists. Read 1 John 1:6-10, and look for the phrase “if we say” to introduce some of the secessionist claims. What are three claims of the secessionists?

1.

2.

3.

What is the common denominator of those who make those claims? (Look for the repeated word after each “if we say” clause.)

6. John introduces the metaphor of walking to distinguish the difference between the secessionists and believers. Fill out the chart below with the consequences or blessings of each.

Walk in the Light	Walk in the Darkness

7. The chart is a diagram of the progression John describes for those in fellowship with Jesus compared with those who are not.

True Fellowship	False Fellowship
Fellowship → Joy ↓ Light ↓ See our sin ↓ Confess sin ↓ Forgiveness ↗	False Fellowship → Lie/God is a liar ↓ Deny God is light ↓ Moral indifference ↓ Hate toward others ↓ Deny sin ↓ Deny need for atonement ↗

How important is it to acknowledge that we sin and need to repent?

How does confession of sin affect our fellowship and our ability to walk in truth?

8. In 1 John 2:1 John states another purpose for writing to his “children.” What is it?

What clue does John give that he is not expecting them to be totally sin free?

9. What is our hope when we sin?

Look up “advocate” and write out the definition.

As our advocate, what did Jesus do?

Note: “Propitiation” (Greek: hilasmos) conveys the idea that God’s wrath toward sin is appeased through an atoning sacrifice. As our advocate, Jesus stands before God on our behalf, seeking mercy for our sins. His blood sacrifice obtains that mercy, extending to us forgiveness for sins and removing God’s wrath from us.

Application

1. The ultimate truth is the Gospel, John 3:16. But the Scriptures give us so many more truths. Is there a truth in which you find it hard to walk? Find two Scriptures that would encourage you to keep walking in that truth.
2. 1 John 1:1-4 tells us of John's experience with Jesus. How would you share your experience with Jesus?
3. The theological truth in this chapter is that God is light. Share a time when you proclaimed this message to someone else.

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts:

"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." 1 John 1:3

- for us to boldly proclaim the Gospel message with our neighbors and friends
- for us to be honest about our sins and seek forgiveness
- for us to see God at work in our lives in very evident ways

Digging Deeper

Read 1 John 1:10 again. How and why do we make God a liar? To get a full answer to this question, examine the following verses. Thinking about our modern culture, compare and contrast what God says about man to what man says about himself.

1 Kings 8:46

Psalm 14:3

Ecclesiastes 7:20

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 64:6

1 John 2:3-27

The early Christian church was getting confused about what they believed because the secessionists were spreading false claims about the faith. John writes to assure the confused people against the secessionists' false claims by offering a series of tests that are theological, moral, and social. The theological test applies to their belief about Jesus, the moral test applies to their obedience to God's commands, and the social test applies to how they treat their brother.

1. How do we know we have come to know Christ? (1 John 2:3)

Which test is this? Circle one:

Theological

Moral

Social

2. To understand what "commandments" John is referring to, look ahead to 1 John 3:23 and write it here.
3. John makes several more "whoever says" statements to distinguish the false claims of the secessionists. Fill in the chart to compare what they claimed versus what they were actually doing.

Reference	Claim	Action
1 John 2:4		
1 John 2:6		
1 John 2:9		

4. In 1 John 2:7-11, John transitions to the next test. Read the passage again. Which test is this? (circle one)

Theological

Moral

Social

What is the key to knowing that you are in the light?

5. Who is John talking about when he says “your brother”?
6. Why is hatred for your brother contrary to love for God? What does such hatred expose about our hearts?
7. Verses 12-14 are written in a poetic style. Spiritually speaking, what are the three levels of maturity in the church and what do they know at each level?

Ex. Children

***Forgiveness of sin
Know the Father***

Fathers

Young men

8. John warns against loving the world in 2:15. What three elements make up the “world”? Write down your own brief explanation/examples of each.

Note: “World” in Greek is “cosmos” and applies to thoughts and attitudes that are against God’s will, not the sum of creation, natural or human. “Pride of life” refers to earthly possessions.

9. Just by dividing the word *antichrist*, write a definition for it.

10. List the characteristics of antichrists based on 1 John 2:18-27.

11. Now write John’s definition of antichrist based upon 1 John 2:22.

12. Read 1 John 2:26-27. What is necessary for discerning truth from deception?

13. Knowing that Jesus is the Christ is what kind of test? (circle one)

Theological

Moral

Social

14. Why is it important to know that Jesus is truly God? What does he promise us?

According to John 17:3, what is eternal life?

Application

1. How can you live out your love for others in such a way that reveals your knowledge of and love for God?
2. What makes it difficult for you to follow God's commandment to love your brother? Where have you fallen short in this?
3. What worldliness (lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride of life) do you struggle with, and how can you resist them?
4. Where do you see the spirit of antichrists at work in our culture?

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

"Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." 1 John 2:6

- for fully assured hearts, that we know we are in Him and forgiven
- for us to delight in truth, enjoy walking in light, and desire to show love
- for our relatives and neighbors to come to know the truth and be one with Christ

Digging Deeper

1 John 2:17 says, "Whoever does the will of God abides forever." What is the will of God in this context? To help, look at what John writes about the will of God in the following passages. Write what you learn about the will of God. How will this help you to not love the world or the things of the world?

John 4:34

John 5:30

John 6:38-40

Week 6

In-Person Teaching Notes

Abiding in Christ

Read 1 John 1-2. Mark the word “abide” each time it appears as you read.

Week 7

1 John 2:28-3:24

1. John opens chapter 3 by calling on his readers to observe the wonder of the Father's love. What privilege has his love given believers?
2. How does the world receive this truth?
3. As children of God, what does the believer know and what is our hope?
4. What is the right response to this hope? (Hint: go back to 1 John 2:28)
5. Write a definition of the word "practice."
6. What is John's definition of sin in verse 4?
7. John has already stated that we have an advocate if we sin (2:1), but what does John mean by "practicing sin"?

8. Who has been sinning from the beginning?

What is God's remedy for this?

9. Fill in verse 9. "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's _____ abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been _____ of God."

What or who is God's seed?

10. What sets apart the children of God from the children of the devil in v. 10?

11. Why did Cain murder his brother?

How is the world like Cain?

12. How should the love of the believer manifest itself? (vv. 16-18)

Read John 15:1-17 when Jesus taught John this lesson. What was Jesus's _____ instruction that made this type of love possible?

13. Confidence and assurance in our faith can be easily undermined by our own doubts. What restores our assurance? (vv. 19-24)

14. What is the commandment we must follow to know we are in the truth?
(v. 23)

What tests are present in this one verse?

15. What is the evidence that we know God abides in us?

Application

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13 and write out in your own words what loving your brother or sister looks like. (Ex. Love is patient. Love is willing to wait))
2. Write out how the truth of the Gospel encourages your heart and mind when you get bogged down with your own shortcomings or failures.
3. What truth did you learn about Jesus in this passage that affirms that Jesus is God?

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” 1 John 3:16

- for eyes to see how we can help our brother and sister
- for a desire to love people as Jesus loves us
- for forgiveness when our selfishness prevents us from displaying the love of God

Digging Deeper

John calls sin “lawlessness.” How does a Biblical understanding of sin help us understand the Gospel rightly? Read the following passages and describe who or what sin affects. What is then a right way to view the scope of the Gospel?

Leviticus 4:13-21

Romans 7:7-25

Romans 8:18-25

Winter
John's Letters:
Part Two

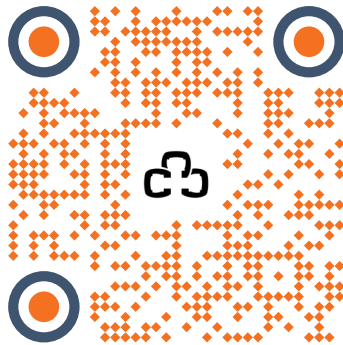
Winter Semester

Welcome to the start of the Winter Semester! This Winter, we will gather together for our final Bible Foundations lesson before we jump back into 1 John. Our first lessons from the Fall, The Story of God's Word and Biblical Interpretation, prepare us for this week: Interpreting Genre.

As we continue our study in 1 John, John's three tests will repeat themselves, ensuring believers are walking in the truth. When we study 2 & 3 John, pay attention to how John applies his exhortation to walk in truth to specific church and personal contexts.

If you are just joining us this semester, feel free to work through the Fall curriculum at your own pace using QR below:

Access the podcast using the QR code below:



Week 1

Bible Foundations: Interpreting Genre

Read: Luke 24:44-45

Review

How to interpret Scripture:

P

R

A

Y

Interpret for Application:

1.

2.

3.

Knowing the Text

The two characteristics of the text are:

1.

2.

Divisions of the Old Testament:

Categories of the New Testament:

Interpreting Genre:

Epistles

Gospels

Psalms

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” Proverbs 2:6

- for authentic relationships to develop this semester
- for godly wisdom to govern conversations
- for a listening posture as we study God’s Word together

Week 2

1 John 4

1. Why does John urge the believers to test the spirits?
2. What is the defining test to discern whether someone has the Spirit of God?
3. Under which category would you put this test? (circle one)
Note: Refer back to Week 5 from the first part of the study for an explanation of the tests.

Theological	Moral	Social
-------------	-------	--------
4. Not only does love come from God, God is _____.
5. In what two ways is the love of God made known to us? (vv. 9-10)
6. Write a definition for “propitiation” and refer back to the note on propitiation in the study on 1 John 2:2.
7. What is the practical result of John explaining God’s love for us? (v. 11)

Mark the words “abide” and “love” in vv. 12-21. Based on your observations of these words, answer the following questions.

8. In whom does God abide?

9. Our belief in God and his Son and our ability to love one another come from whom? (v. 13)

10. What does the love of God give us?

11. 1 John 4:18 is a much quoted verse. Read vv. 17-18. What fear is John specifically targeting?

12. What must be true of those who are perfected in love?

13. Why is the practical exhortation to love one another so critical for a watching world?

14. How does Jesus being our propitiation solve the dilemma of someone having a fear of punishment?

Application

1. The Trinity is not directly identified in Scripture, but we see it referenced over and over again. How is receiving and showing love related to the Trinity?
2. Why does John combine loving God (moral) with loving your neighbor (social)? What does it mean to love your neighbor? What does it not mean?
3. How does God abiding in you give you hope for today?

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

- for our love of one another to be a true reflection of the invisible God
- for greater discernment of truth over error
- for our neighbors who do not know this love of God

Digging Deeper

“The deity of Christ (theological), God’s love for us and our love for God (moral) and man (social) cannot be separated. The theology which robs Christ of his Godhead, robs God of the glory of His love, and robs man of the one belief that generates a perfect love within him. To weaken faith is to deaden love.” John Stott

Discuss how important theological truth is to our everyday life. What happens if the theological, moral, or social truth is missing?

1 John 5

- The title of our study is “Walking in the Truth.” John’s desire was for his “beloved” to walk in the truth of the Gospel (2 John 4). The tests to know we are walking in truth are moral, social, and theological. All three tests merge in 1 John 5:1-3. Put the right test beside these phrases:

	Verse	Test
1 John 5:1a	Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.	
1 John 5:1b	Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.	
1 John 5:2-3	By this we know we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.	

- In vv. 6-12, John lists what testifies that the Son of God did come in the flesh. Fill in the rest to complete the first set of three.

_____ Water _____

- Read Matt 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23, and John 1:29-34. What does “water” refer to?
- Read John 19:28-37. Which item on the list does this refer to?
- Read John 15:26, and write out who will bear witness about Jesus.

3. John then lists three more testimonies that support the claim that Jesus is the Son of God from 1 John 5:9-12. List them below:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

4. John sums up why he is writing to his children in 1 John 5:13. What is it?

5. Knowing we possess eternal life in Jesus Christ affects how we pray. John mentioned prayer already in 1 John 3:21-22. What is a commonality between that passage and 1 John 5:14-15?

6. God is certain to answer prayers prayed according to _____

7. For whom should we pray? For whom should we not pray?

8. Verse 16 has been notoriously difficult to interpret. Consider the following questions to help get an understanding of what John is saying. Let's look at what "death" means and who a "brother" is. After answering these questions, you will be better equipped to understand what is the sin leading to death.
 - a. Considering the entire letter is about the assurance of eternal life and how to know you have it, do you think "death" here is spiritual or physical?

 - b. Can a Christian (or brother) fall into sin from time to time? (see 1 John 2:1)

c. How can a Christian's sin NOT lead to death? (see 1 John 1:9)

d. Who would face certain spiritual death if they died in their sins?

The sobering reality is that some people remain stubborn and committed to their rejection of the Gospel and the deity of Jesus Christ. John is saying that at this point, there is nothing more you can do.

9. John lists 3 concluding points at the end of chapter 5 that state what we know. What are they?

1.

2.

3.

Do you think Christianity is a faith of certainty or uncertainty?

10. The last verse of 1 John seems out of place and abrupt. John Stott says, "What is certain is that all 'God substitutes' are properly 'idols'." Thinking back over 1 John, what would be the idols the recipients needed to be on guard against?

Application

1. Do you know you have eternal life? How? Write a personal statement of assurance based upon the testimonies John lists in 5:6-12.
2. How can the evidence given for the deity of Jesus be helpful when sharing your faith?
3. How can the certainty of eternal life in Christ impact your prayer life?

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” 1 John 5:4

- for each of you to be strengthened in your faith
- for deliverance from the lies of the enemy and from present temptations
- for confidence in God’s Word

Digging Deeper

Based on the difficulty of 5:16 which states, "I do not say that one should pray for that," what about the stubbornly unrepentant? This challenging verse in the chapter can lead to many other questions. How can we know who is stubbornly unrepentant? Are we really not to pray for them? Examine these few passages and write down what you observe about them.

Jeremiah 7:16-18, 11:14, 14:11, John 17:9, Romans 1:18-25.

God alone is sovereign, and He alone knows the hearts of men. What does man's commitment to rejecting the truth tell us about the human heart? Who alone is able to keep us from this end? Read 1 John 5:18.

2 John

1. How does the beginning of 2 John differ from that of 1 John?
2. How does John identify himself in 2 John 1, and to whom is he writing?

Why is this title important in this letter?

3. What part of the opening greetings indicates that John is still addressing the concerns about the secessionists?
4. What is causing John to rejoice?
5. What is the truth John is referring to? Consider the entirety of this letter to determine this.
6. Underline the word “truth” in 2 John 1-4. Circle the word “love” in vv. 1-6. Now put a triangle by the word “commandment” in vv. 4-6. Match these words with the three tests from 1 John.

Theological

Love

Moral

Truth

Social

Commandment

7. What words does John use to describe those who do not believe Jesus came in the flesh?

8. Read 2 John 9 in at least three different translations (such as KJV, NIV, CEB; you can find these on a Bible app like YouVersion or an online source such as BibleGateway.com). What do you think it means when John writes, "everyone who goes on ahead..."? Can you think of any present day examples of people who fit this description?

9. John lists three imperatives in the verses below. What are they?

2 John 5-6 _____

2 John 8 _____

2 John 10 _____

10. One commentator outlines 2 John this way:

Love the truth

Live the truth

Look for the truth

Long for the truth

Which verses in 2 John put meat on this outline?

11. In 2 John 10-11 John gives a strong instruction not to receive someone who does not confess that Jesus came in the flesh. What would be the concern if they did accept such people?

Application

1. Why is going beyond the Word of God so dangerous?
2. When have you experienced the joy in fellowship John speaks about in 2 John 4?
3. Why must truth be lived rather than just simply believed?

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

“And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments.” 2 John 6

- for a renewed sense of surrender to God and His commandments
- for the people at Christ Central Church to love truth
- for protection from the lies of the world

Digging Deeper

Read the Mathematics of the Cults chart below. The Scripture references are helpful to see what the Bible says about the Word of God and the person of Jesus Christ. Getting the equation of Jesus wrong has huge consequences. He is truly human and truly divine.

Write down present day examples that have each of these errors.

How can we be on guard against them all at the same time?

Math	Description	Scripture	Example
Addition (+)	They add an extra-biblical source of authority by prophet, pen, or professor.	Rev. 23:18	
Subtraction (-)	They subtract the person and work of Jesus Christ the Son of God. They deny his deity and find inadequate His work of redemption.	1 John 2:22-23	
Division (÷)	They divide our allegiance from God through Christ alone to others.	1 Cor. 1:10-13, Gal. 3:27-29	
Multiplication (x)	They multiply the requirements for salvation. All advocate some form of works salvation.	Matt. 23:1-4	

(Adapted from Akin, 1,2,&3 John,159)

3 John

1. John's first letter was to a group of churches. His second was to one church in particular. To whom is he writing in 3 John?
2. Read through the letter and circle "truth." What is John's greatest joy?
3. Thinking back through all John has written in the letters leading to this one, describe how being "in truth" demonstrates that Gaius "passes" the three tests.
4. Three people are mentioned in 3 John. What roles do you think they served in the church? Even though titles are not given, imagine how each man served.
5. Gaius and Diotrephes are in contrast to each other. John gives four obvious differences for each. List them here.

Gaius

Diotrephes

1.

2.

3.

4.

6. Who is Gaius serving? How are these people different from the group John mentions in 3 John?

7. How does John's instruction in verse 11 sum up his exhortation from all three letters?

8. What does John encourage Gaius to do in order to be "fellow workers for the truth"? (2 John 8).

9. Demetrius also receives a good report. Who or what testifies to this?

10. In 3 John 13-15, what facts testify to John's pastoral heart?

Application

1. If your spiritual life was made to manifest physically, how healthy would you be? How important is your spiritual well-being to the church?
2. Demetrius received a good testimony from three sources. List two sources that can testify to your spiritual health and character in the church.
3. Recall a time when your joy was simply over someone walking in the truth.

Group Prayer: Use the following Scripture as you pray through the bulleted prompts.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3 John 4

- for eyes to see what is good and to imitate it
- for our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ
- for a specific part of our life to look different as we apply his Word

Digging Deeper

John closes his last letter by saying, "I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face." Think through this statement and write down some ways that our physical presence in worship and fellowship is important. Think especially of the tests John has used throughout his letters.

Ex: Being present physically encourages my brothers (social test)

Week 6

In-Person Teaching Notes

Applying 1, 2, & 3 John: Discerning Conflict in the Church

Sources consulted in the creation of this study:

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