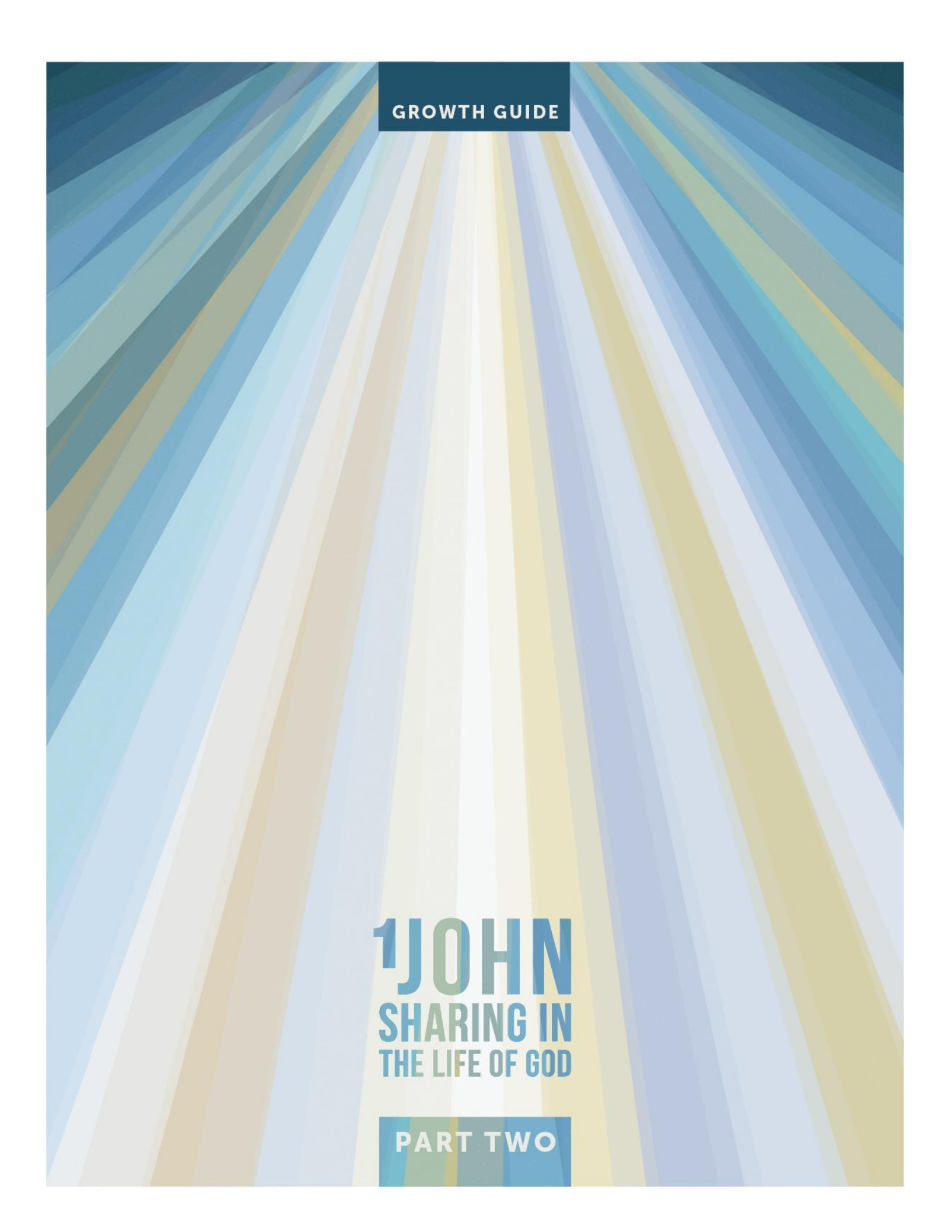




GROWTH GUIDE

1JOHN
SHARING IN
THE LIFE OF GOD

PART TWO

Sharing in the Life of God

1 John Growth Guide Part 2

Our prayer is that as we study the letter of 1 John, we would grow in our enjoyment of fellowship with God and with each other. What a wonderful reality that God wants us to share in His life, the life that the Father, the Son and the Spirit share with each other! We can be confident that we are sharing in the life of God the Father if we have a true belief in the Son and a true commitment to love each other. Over and over John will give us ways to know that we are children of God who share in His life. John is teaching us what is true for all of God's children and what should characterize our lives: faith in Christ, obedience to God, and love for others.

As you read and study this wonderful letter, may your confidence in Christ and the love of God for His children through Christ grow, and may your love for others in God's family flourish!

Nathan for the Growth Guide Editing Team (Howard Amland, Tom Dudenhofer, Dan Jarms, Lana Pustovit, Lynn Yount)

SCHEDULE

Lesson 9	April 3	1 John 3:11-18
Lesson 10	April 10	1 John 3:19-24
No Lesson	April 17	Easter Break
Lesson 11	April 24	1 John 4:1-6
Lesson 12	May 1	1 John 4:7-12
Lesson 13	May 8	1 John 4:13-21
Lesson 14	May 15	1 John 5:1-5
Lesson 15	May 22	1 John 5:6-12
Lesson 16	May 29	1 John 5:13-16

Lesson 9 - 1 John 3:11-18

*Love one another,
laying down our lives for each other*

Sermon on April 3; work on this lesson March 28-April 2; meet with your growth group to discuss April 3-9

Teaching Goal: Understand why we should love one another and what it means to love one another.

Application Goal: Love each other in deed and truth, motivated by the model of Christ laying down His life for us.

Launching Question

What is your favorite book or movie that depicts a story of someone laying down their life to love someone else?

1 John 3:11-18

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 3:11-15

2. What is the command or message that John heard from the beginning that he is repeating here?
3. What is true about the one who does not love his brother, according to these verses?

Discussion Question

4. Those who do not love other Christians are showing that they abide in death (spiritual death, separation from God). Why do those who do not know God hate His children?

1 John 3:16-18

5. How did Christ teach us what love is?

Discussion Questions

6. What does it mean for us to lay down our lives for each other as Christ laid down his life for us?
7. What are ways that people love in “word and talk” instead of “deed and truth”?

Application Questions

8. In what ways can you further pursue loving others by laying down your life for them, loving them in deed and truth? List some specific people and specific ways you can love them.

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 1: Being a disciple who makes disciples

We are called by Jesus to follow Him and He will make us fishers of people. He wants us to be disciples who are helping others to be disciples. Every follower of Jesus is a minister and has the privilege of speaking the truth in love to others, to help them to know Jesus and to obey Jesus.

Matthew 28:18-20, John 15:7-12

1. From these two passages, what are some important characteristics of disciples of Jesus?

2. What do you learn from Matthew 28:19-20 about how disciples are made?

Ephesians 4:12-16

3. This passage teaches us that every follower of Jesus is a minister who has a ministry to other Christians in the church to which they belong. How does Paul describe that ministry in this passage?

4. What are some things that can get in the way of us being disciples who make disciples?

5. What are the next steps you can take to be a disciple who makes disciples?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 10 - 1 John 3:19-24

Confidence as a child of God comes as you believe in Christ, obey Him and love others

Sermon on April 10; work on this lesson April 4-9; meet with your growth group to discuss April 10-16

Teaching Goal: Loving others in deed and truth and believing in Jesus gives us confidence in our relationship with God.

Application Goal: Pray confidently because you are in God and He is in you, as evidenced by your belief in Jesus and your love for others.

Launching Question

How does your level of confidence in your relationship with God affect your prayer life?

1 John 3:19-24

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 3:18-19

2. 1 John 3:19 says, "By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure (better translation might be "persuade" or "convince") our heart before him..." From the context, what is this verse referring to that convinces us we are of the truth?

1 John 3:20

1 John 3:20 could be interpreted one of several different ways. The verse says, "For whenever our heart condemns us (or convicts us), God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything." Here are a couple of the options:

- From verse 19 we know that we persuade and convince our hearts that we are of the truth and are in God when we are loving others in deed and truth. So, whenever our hearts condemn us, we trust what God says about us and what He has done for us in Christ rather than trusting our own hearts. After all, God knows everything! He knows our ups and downs and is greater than us. He is faithful to cleanse us because of Christ's blood.

Daniel Akin writes in the Christ-Centered Exposition commentary, "Even though Christ has propitiated all our sins by His perfect atoning work, we may experience a condemning heart or guilty conscience, something the great and omnipotent God does not want us to have. So when my conscience sends me on a guilt trip, I look in faith to the God who is greater than my vacillating heart and who assures me of my total and complete forgiveness through the perfect work of Jesus" (Exalting Jesus in 1, 2, & 3 John, p. 84).

(continued)

- When we don't want to love others in deed and truth because it is hard and costly, or when we are tempted to hate others, then our hearts are condemning us. However, God is greater than our hearts. He is perfectly able to love the downtrodden and broken sinner. He knows all things. In this sense, the verse is saying when your heart is condemning you because you don't want to love others, you should repent and trust God because He is greater.

From the Pillar Commentary: "In summary, verses 19-20 function as a stern warning against that meanness of heart which objects to our expending material resources to meet the needs of fellow believers, and provide a foil for the positive reinforcement of generosity offered in verses 21-22" (Kruse, Colin G. The Letters of John, p. 141).

Discussion Question

3. Which of the two options for interpreting verse 3:20 do you think best fits the context of 1 John? Perhaps both are true statements, but which one best fits the context of 1 John 3:19-24? Why do you think so?

1 John 3:21-22

4. What causes our confidence before God, according to these verses?

What did John say in verses 18-19 would give our hearts assurance?

Discussion Question

5. John says here in verse 22 that "whatever we ask from him we receive." He says something similar in the Gospel of John 15:7-8. What does this verse mean? Why do we sometimes ask for things that we do not end up receiving?

1 John 3:23-24

6. What are God's commands, and what is the result of keeping His commands?

Discussion Questions

7. What does it mean that God abides in us and we abide in Him? *See also the Gospel of John 14:21-23, 15:7-10.*

8. How does the Spirit show us that we are abiding in God? See also 1 John 4:2-3 to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Summary

9. How would you summarize what this passage teaches us about the confidence that we can have before God that we are sharing in His life?

Application Question

10. Of the following issues that this passage addresses, what is the weakest point in your confidence before God that you share in His life?
 - a. How you love others in deed and truth
 - b. Your own heart condemning you
 - c. Your prayer life
 - d. Your obedience
 - e. Your belief in Jesus Christ
 - f. Your understanding of the Holy Spirit's ministry in you

What can you do this week to address that weakness based on what 1 John teaches? What verses in 1 John could be helpful?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 2: Making time to learn from Jesus and to love others

We have to learn to make time for the important things in life. We need to take time to be thankful and to appreciate God and His good gifts. We need to make time to gather with God's people. We need to make time to rest. We need to make time to take in God's Word and talk to God. We need to make time to speak of Christ with others and to serve them.

Ephesians 5:15-17

1. Why do we need to redeem the time? What does it look like practically to buy back time, seeking to be wise and to do the will of the Lord?

Luke 10:38-42

2. What good things (or bad things) in your life get in the way of that which is most important?

What most important thing do you want to make time for? What realistic commitment can you make to begin making time for that important thing?

1 Timothy 4:7-8

3. The Christian life involves being disciplined for the sake of being godly. What disciplines do you want to pursue adding into your life for the sake of being godly and loving others?
4. God designed us to take time to rest every day while we sleep. He also calls us to take time to rest from our work every week for the sake of gathering with the church to worship and hear God's Word, to sing, and to encourage one another. How are you doing with making time in your life for rest? In *8 Habits for Growth*, Darryl Dash talks about making time to give thanks to God for His good gifts and to enjoy and appreciate His gifts throughout each day. How do you want to grow in biblical rest, whether it be the daily aspect, the sleeping aspect, or the gathering with God's people aspect?
5. What steps can you take this week to make time for one important thing? Choose a realistic, achievable goal that you can stick with and practice.

Prayer Requests

Lesson 11 - 1 John 4:1-6

The Spirit of God leads you to confess that Jesus came in the flesh

Sermon on April 24; work on this lesson April 18-23; meet with your growth group to discuss April 24-30

Teaching Goal: Understand that the Holy Spirit will always lead you to confess that Jesus came in the flesh.

Application Goal: Reject false testimony that rejects Jesus and hold fast to the true testimony about Jesus from the Holy Spirit.

Launching Question

What false messages do you see promoted the most in our culture in 2022?

1 John 4:1-6

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 4:1-3

2. John tells his readers not to believe every spirit but to test the spirits to see if they are from God. What does he teach them about how to test the spirits?

Discussion Questions

3. John talks about testing the spirits to see if the message is from the Spirit of God or from the spirit of the antichrist. What is the relationship between the person speaking, their message and the spirit that is responsible for the message?
4. Why is it essential to confess that Jesus came in the flesh? What were the false teachers denying when they denied that Jesus came in the flesh?

1 John 4:4-6

5. What is true for those who are from God?

6. What are the characteristics of those teachers who are from the world?

Discussion Questions

7. What does it mean that those who are from God have overcome those who speak from the spirit of the antichrist? How have the children of God overcome the world, according to 1 John 4:4?

8. What do you learn from these verses about the connection between who you are (someone born of God or not born of God) and who you listen to and believe?

How might this impact the role of media and entertainment that you enjoy?

Application Questions

9. Do you have a firm grasp on the essential things that the Bible teaches us about Jesus? What steps can you take to grow in your knowledge of Christ?

10. What false teaching about Jesus are you hearing around you in our culture? Remember that the Holy Spirit has inspired the Bible and those who are led by Him will teach the message that the Bible teaches about Jesus. In what ways might you be tempted to stray from the true teaching about Jesus from the Bible?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 3: Remembering the Gospel

We need the good news of Jesus Christ not just at the beginning of our relationship with God, but every day that we live on this earth. Christ has saved us (justification), He is saving us (sanctification) and He will save us (glorification). Every day we need to remember the gospel and live by faith in Christ as we trust and grow in Him.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

1. What is Paul's summary of the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ according to this passage?
What else would you say could be included as the good news of Jesus Christ?

Romans 1:15-17, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:23

2. In these verses, what do you learn about the importance of continuing to remember and trust in the gospel, especially after you have become a Christian?

Colossians 2:6-7

3. What do we learn about the Christian life? What is the role of remembering the good news of Jesus Christ in our ongoing growth?
4. When you are not remembering the gospel of Jesus, what do you tend to default to as your mode of operation? Legalistic efforts to earn God's favor? Feeling like it is fine to just continue in sin? Trusting in yourself in some other way?
5. How can you grow in remembering the gospel each day?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 12 - 1 John 4:7-12

Foundation of love is God loving us through Christ - our love makes His love known

Sermon on May 1; work on this lesson April 25-30; meet with your growth group to discuss May 1-6

Teaching Goal: We must love other Christians because God is love and everyone born of God loves as God loves. God loved us by sending Jesus!

Application Goal: Be motivated by God's love for us through sending Christ to love others.

Launching Question

Who is one of your personal heroes because of how they have loved others?

1 John 4:7-12

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 4:7-8

2. John commands his readers again to love one another. What reasons for loving each other does he give here?

1 John 4:9-11

3. How was God's love demonstrated to us?

Discussion Questions

4. How does what God did to love us through sending Jesus compel us to love one another?

5. What does it mean that God abides in us and His love is perfected in us if we love each other?

Summary Question

6. John has commanded them to love one another many times already in this letter. What new motivations for loving each other does he give us here? In other words, what does this section add to what we already learned in 1 John 2:3-11 and 3:10-24?

Application Question

7. How do you want to grow in being a more loving person as you consider how God has loved you through Christ?

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in our hearts to transform us. What Bible verses will you meditate on as you prayerfully depend on the Holy Spirit to change your heart?

What heart attitudes do you want to put on?

What attitudes do you need to put off?

What actions do you want to pursue more consistently?

8. Spend time praising God for how He has shown us His love by sending Jesus to be our Savior!

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 4: Reading the Bible

The basis of our relationship with God is the wonderful reality that He has spoken to us in His Word. He has revealed Himself to us so that we can know Him and worship Him!

2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

1. What do you see here that is true about the Bible (also called the “Scriptures”)?
2. What are we commanded to do with the Bible?

Psalms 1:2-3, Colossians 3:16, Psalm 119:9-11

3. Often we focus on reading or listening to the Bible, which is a very wonderful and necessary thing. However, what do you see emphasized in these two passages? What does God want us to do with His Word?
4. Often people see God’s Word as a book of things to do and not do rather than as the Living Word of God that reveals who God is. Or, people can think of reading God’s Word as the thing they must do to keep God and other Christians happy with them. If you struggle with consistently meditating on the Bible, what kind of thinking tends to cause you to struggle?

What truth about God’s Word do you want to dwell on to encourage your pursuit of God through His Word?

5. What habit of reading or listening to or thinking about the Bible do you want to commit to or have you already committed to?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 13 - 1 John 4:13-21

Assurance comes as we abide in Jesus

Sermon on May 8; work on this lesson May 2-7; meet with your growth group to discuss May 8-14

Teaching Goal: Understand the marks of one who is sharing in the life of God.

Application Goal: Have confidence in your relationship with God as His love in you moves you to love others because of your faith in Jesus.

Launching Question

What do you think are the marks of being a citizen of the United States of America? How can you be confident that you are an American? What about the marks of a citizen of Spokane? What is unique to Spokaneites? Is there anything distinctive?

1 John 4:13-21

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 4:13-16

2. This section is a progression of realities or marks of those who share in the life of God. List the mark or evidence or reality from each verse, and then in the space between write down the connection between each reality.

13:

14:

15:

16:

Discussion Question

3. How would you summarize the connection between abiding in God, His Spirit being in us, our understanding of Christ coming to save us, and our confidence in His love for us?

1 John 4:17-18

4. How does understanding and believing God's love for us in Christ impact our perspective on the final judgment that is coming?

1 John 4:19-21

5. Why do we love? What is the connection between loving God and loving your brother or sister in Christ?

Discussion Question

6. What does it mean that God first loved us? Consider verses like Ephesians 1:4-5 and Ephesians 2:1-5.

Summary Question

7. John wants his readers to be confident that they share in the life of God. What is the evidence of truly sharing in the life of God that he has been teaching in this section?

Application Questions

8. If our ability to love one another comes from remembering and believing how God has first loved us, what can you do to remember and rejoice in God's love for you more frequently (and fuel your love for others)?

9. How do you need to grow in loving others if your love is going to accurately reflect the quality of God's love for you through Christ?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 5: Prayer

Not only does God talk to us, but He wants us to talk to Him! The Bible is full of wonderful promises about God's desire that we talk to Him, which we call prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew 7:7-11, John 14:13-14

1. What are some principles about talking to God that you learn from Jesus here? How does He teach us to pray? What does He tell us to pray about?

Hebrews 4:14-16

2. Prayer is an amazing privilege. You can think of it as a subject drawing near to their king, or a child drawing near to their father or mother. What does the author of Hebrews tell us is the basis of our confidence that we can draw near to God and receive the help that we need?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Colossians 4:2

3. What does Paul command his readers to do on an ongoing basis in these verses? How is it possible to do what he commands here? What does it look like?
4. What gets in the way of you enjoying the privilege of prayer?
5. In what ways do you want to grow in your relationship with God through prayer? What prayer related habit do you want to commit to or have you committed to practicing?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 14 - 1 John 5:1-5

Those born of God love by keeping His commandments by faith in Jesus

Sermon on May 15; work on this lesson May 9-14; meet with your growth group to discuss May 15-21

Teaching Goal: Understand the victory and obedience that belongs to the children of God because of Christ!

Application Goal: Trust in Christ's victory to give you obedience and love for others.

Launching Question

What is a task that you have done that was very burdensome? What made it such a burden? What is a task that you have done that has not been a burden? What made it not a burden?

1 John 5:1-5

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 5:1-3

2. Who is born of God? See also the Gospel of John 1:12-13.
3. If someone loves God the Father, whom will they also love?

Discussion Question

4. What is the connection between loving God, loving others, and keeping God's commands?

1 John 5:3-5

5. What does it mean to “overcome”?

Who overcomes the world?

What overcomes the world?

Discussion Question

6. What do you think John means when he states that God’s commands are not a burden?

Why are God’s commands not burdensome according to these verses?

Summary

7. What is true for all those who are born of God according to this section?

Application

8. What commands of God seem burdensome to you right now? How can you experience the victory and life of Christ regarding those commands?

9. How can you grow in living out your identity as a child of God by faith in Christ?

What realities that belong to God’s children do you need to remember and appropriate?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 6: Fellowshiping with other Christians

God is making a people for Himself, building His family. He gathers His family together in the church, the body of Christ. Through the various local churches scattered around the world, God is making Himself known as He conforms each of Christ's followers into the image of Christ.

Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Timothy 3:15

1. What do you learn about the identity and the purpose of the church from these passages?

Hebrews 10:24-25, Hebrews 3:12-14, John 13:34-35

2. What are some of the essential purposes of gathering together with other believers?

Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 13:17, Ephesians 4:11

3. What are some of the important things that God calls Christ's followers to do that make it important to belong to a local church?

What barriers do you encounter to fellowship with other Christians?

4. How do you want to grow in living out your calling as a disciple of Jesus in the context of a local church? How can you pursue more fellowship with other Christians?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 15 - 1 John 5:6-12

The Testimony of God about Jesus by the Spirit through His baptism and death

Sermon on May 22; work on this lesson May 16-21; meet with your growth group to discuss May 22-28

Teaching Goal: Understand the testimony that God bears about Christ through the Holy Spirit, Jesus' baptism and His death.

Application Goal: Believe in the Son of God and share in the life of God!

Launching Question

What testimony from others or from Scripture impacted you the most when you became a believer?

1 John 5:6-12

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 5:6-9

2. These verses are talking about God's testimony about Jesus through the Spirit, the water and the blood. What do you learn about these testimonies from these verses?

Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 27:45-54

3. It seems that the testimony of water refers to Jesus' baptism and the testimony of blood refers to Jesus' crucifixion.

What do you learn about Jesus from His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17)?

In what ways does Jesus' crucifixion testify to who He is and what He was doing (Matthew 27:45-54)?

“The Spirit, the water and the blood”

“Some have pointed out that, being sinless, Jesus had no need of being baptized. He does not belong there. And that is true. He no more belongs at a baptism for repentance than He does on a cross for sinners. In both events He identifies Himself with the sinners He came to save. Our Lord’s baptism says, ‘Look at the Holy Spirit of God descending on Him and anointing Him.’ It says, ‘Listen to the voice of the Father and His announcement concerning Him.’ Jesus was not a mere man. He is the Son of God who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).” (Akin, Daniel. Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1, 2 & 3 John, p.131.)

The Spirit testifies to who Jesus is as He moves the Biblical writers to record the truth about who Jesus is and what He did. The Spirit testifies in the hearts of all who believe, illuminating our hearts, giving us understanding and conviction about who Jesus is and what He did *for us*. As the quote above from Akin says, the water points to Jesus’ baptism and to His ministry that was initiated at His baptism. The blood is the witness that the false teachers of John’s time were denying the most. A false teacher named Cerinthus claimed that Christ’s spirit left him before Jesus died, thus denying that the Messiah actually died for our sins (MacArthur Study Bible, 1 John introduction notes). John is refuting that false teaching. Jesus willingly laid down His life (John 10:18). God in the flesh, God the Son, died on the cross, fully bearing the wrath of God the Father (1 John 2:2).

We have these three witnesses powerfully declaring that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The Holy Spirit, Christ’s baptism and His death on the cross all declare to us that this is the One in whom we should place all of our faith!

Discussion Question

4. In what ways does the Holy Spirit bear testimony about who Jesus is? How does the “water” or baptism and the “blood” or crucifixion agree with the testimony of the Holy Spirit?

1 John 5:10-12

5. What do you learn about the testimony from these verses?

6. What do you learn about life from these verses? What does John mean by “life”? What is the only way to get life, according to these verses?

Discussion Question

7. What does it mean that whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself?

Application Questions

8. How can you more frequently return to the testimony of the Spirit, the water, and the blood to be encouraged and strengthened in your faith?
9. With whom would you like to share these testimonies so that they might believe in the Son and share in the life of God?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 7: Putting off the old life of sin

A disciple of Jesus has been born into God's family and is learning to walk as Jesus walks. This requires putting off the old way of life that still tempts us because of sin that remains in us. The Bible often talks about the part of us that still wants to sin as our flesh or the old person. We are taught to put off the old person as you would take off an old coat.

Ephesians 4:22-24

1. How does Ephesians 4:22 describe what we do with the old person?

Colossians 3:5-11

2. What kinds of things does Paul command the readers to do with the life of sin?

Romans 6:1-11

3. What truths does Paul teach here that the follower of Jesus must believe regarding the old life of sin?

What does it mean to consider yourself dead to sin?

1 John 1:7-10

4. What does this passage teach us to do with our sin?

5. What sins seem to continue tempting you the most?

How can you put off those sins?

What truths from this study do you need to remember and put into practice?

Pick one verse or passage to memorize to encourage yourself in putting off the old life of sin.

Prayer Requests

Lesson 16 - 1 John 5:13-17

Confidence in prayer and in life

Sermon on May 29; work on this lesson May 23-28; meet with your growth group to discuss May 29-June 4

Teaching Goal: Be confident in your relationship with God as you pray, and especially as you pray for others.

Launching Question

Do you have any stories that you want to share of a time that God answered one of your prayers?

1 John 5:13-17

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 5:13

2. This is the theme or purpose of John's letter. What truth does this verse emphasize about how one can be confident that he or she is sharing in the life of God?

1 John 5:14-15

3. What is the promise of these verses and what are the conditions of that promise?

Discussion Question

4. Why do we often not pray about things despite the promises about God answering our prayers?

What does this promise mean for your day-to-day, moment-by-moment prayer life?

What kind of confidence does God want you to have in Him and His desire to hear and answer your prayers?

1 John 5:16-17

5. What command does John give that directs our praying?

Discussion Question

6. What is the sin that leads to death that John is talking about? Consider the context of John and what he has taught us so far about spiritual death.

"Sin that leads to death"

1 John 5:16-17 teaches us about praying for fellow Christians who commit "sins that do not lead to death." What kind of death is he talking about? Physical death or spiritual death? *It seems like spiritual death, separation from God, is the focus here.* What is this sin that John is referring to that does not lead to spiritual death? And what is the sin that leads to death? We know from Romans 6:23 that "the wages of sin is death." All sin brings death. So John must not be saying there are some sins that do not require forgiveness or that, if left unforgiven, would not lead to death. That would contradict the rest of Scripture. The only way someone avoids spiritual death is to believe in the Son of God so that he or she might have life (1 John 5:13).

From the context of the book of 1 John, we know that true children of God will confess their sins and will practice obedience and love for other Christians. They do not abide in death, but rather they abide in life. Here we see that one of the means God uses is intercessory prayer. When we see other Christians sinning, we know it is God's will to help them to confess that sin and to turn from it. We pray for them, trusting that their sin will not lead them to death. Christ has taken the wrath of God for them and has forgiven them!

What is the sin that leads to death? It is the sin of continually rejecting Christ. This heart of rejecting Christ is shown in a life of practicing sin, hating Christians, and not believing the truth about Christ. Daniel Akin writes that the sin that leads to death is "total rejection of the gospel and Christ. This is the sin of the false teachers who willfully and habitually oppose the witness of God concerning the person and the work of His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 2:19). This one is not called a brother. He is an apostate." ([Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in 1, 2 & 3 John](#), p.144.)

It seems that this sin that leads to death that John is saying he is not telling them to pray for is the sin of the antichrist, the false teacher. This one is condemned. As Jude 13 says, these are the ones "for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever." Jesus talked about a sin that is not going to be forgiven in Matthew 12:31-32, which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

If you are willing to repent and trust in Jesus, confessing Him as Lord, then you are not guilty of the sin that leads to death and is not going to be forgiven. If you are following the spirit of the antichrist, denying Christ and leading others astray with your false teaching, then it is very possible that you are already condemned.

[We have an important ministry to each other - when we see our brothers or sisters in Christ sinning, we should pray for them!](#)

Application Question

7. How has studying 1 John either challenged your confidence that you share in the life of God or strengthened your confidence that you share in the life of God?

8. How would greater confidence in your relationship with God impact your prayer life?

9. What steps do you want to take to grow in your prayer ministry for others?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 8: Putting on the new life of Christ

There is a radical transformation happening in the life of every disciple of Jesus. We are being transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). God is making our lives look like Jesus' life. In this process we are working hard at becoming like Christ (Philippians 2:12) and God is working in us (Philippians 2:13).

Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:10-12

1. What do you learn from these passages about putting on the new life? What are we doing? What is God doing?

2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 13:14, Hebrews 12:1-2

2. What do these passages say the believer is doing as God is transforming him or her into the image of Christ?

3. What stood out to you from this study that you want to spend more time thinking about?

4. What are some specific ways that you can put on the life of Christ in your actions by faith in Him this week?

Prayer Requests

Lesson 17 - 1 John 5:18-21

Confidence in Christ!

Sermon on June 5; work on this lesson May 30-June 4; meet with your growth group to discuss June 5-11

Teaching Goal: Understand the danger of idols and the evil one and the protection of Jesus.

Application Goal: Trust in Jesus and the new birth and reject the world, Satan, and idols.

Launching Question

How have you seen God protecting you from the temptations of the world and the evil one through knowing Jesus?

1 John 5:18-21

1. Make as many observations as you can from this section and write down any questions you think of from this section. This will help you to further observe the passage as you seek to answer your questions from the passage. It's okay if you cannot answer all of the questions you come up with. Write down some of your favorite observations and questions to share with your group.

1 John 5:18-19

2. What are the characteristics of those who are born of God that you see in these verses?

Discussion Question

3. What does it mean that the only begotten One of God protects (or keeps or guards) those born of God? How does He keep them? (Consider what Jesus says in John 17:12,15-19 about keeping God's children. See also 1 Peter 1:5 and Jude 24 about how we are kept.)

Quote from Daniel Akin, *Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in 1, 2 & 3 John*, p. 146:
“Jesus, by His work on the cross, obtained my salvation. Now, by His work in heaven, He maintains my salvation (cf. Hebrews 7:25). Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten of God, protects me and keeps me safe. Therefore, ... ‘the evil one does not touch’ me. The word ‘touch’ has the idea of grabbing hold of something with the intent to harm. Alexander Ramsay says, ‘He is well kept whom Christ keeps; the enemy of souls cannot lay hold of him: he assaults him but cannot seize’ (quoted in Vaughan, *1, 2, 3 John*, 134). Satan may grab at us and tempt us through doubt, friends who fall away, idols, fleshly enticements, and worldly allurements, but because of the power of Christ he cannot get us. There again is a beautiful logic in this verse. The Devil does not touch the Christian and harm him in any ultimate sense because he is protected by the Son. And because the Son keeps the believer safe, he cannot persist in or continually practice sin. It is contrary to his nature. It is contrary to his Protector.”

1 John 5:20

4. What do you learn about Jesus from this verse?

5. What do you learn about those who are believing in Christ from this verse?

Discussion Question

6. How do the truths about Jesus and those who trust in Him encourage you and impact your life?

1 John 5:21

7. What is John’s final command in his letter?

Discussion Question

8. Why does John end the letter exhorting them to keep themselves from idols?

Application Questions

9. What truths about Christ and those who are born of God do you need to remember to keep you from practicing sin and to help you to obey? How could you more frequently remind yourself of those gospel truths?

10. What idols are we tempted to look to or trust in for satisfaction, security, or hope? How can you put off those idols and look to Christ instead?

Equipping Section Discipleship 101

Week 9: Sharing the good news with others

We have the privilege of telling others about our wonderful God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Luke 24:44-49

1. What is Jesus' commission to His disciples? What is He calling us to do?

Colossians 4:2-6

2. What do you learn here about speaking about Christ with others from Paul's example?

1 Peter 2:9-10

3. What is the purpose of the church? How does this relate to sharing the gospel with people?

Revelation 5:9-10

4. This is the certain result of Christ's work through His people – people from every tongue and tribe and nation and language will be gathered around the throne of God, worshiping the Lamb of God! How does this encourage you to speak the good news of Jesus to others?

5. Who are you praying for and seeking to spend time with and to speak the gospel to?

What can you do to be better equipped for sharing the gospel with others?

Prayer Requests

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