



I JOHN

Study Guide by Pastor Keith Hamblen



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Calvary Bible Church
3180 West Elm Street
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“if we walk in the light” (1:7)!

I John 1

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may [regard with pleasure] wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps.119:18)!

Remember to pray for Spirit-filling to understand and enjoy this study (Lk.11:13)!

“First John is a family letter from the Father to His ‘little children’ who are in the world. With the possible exception of the Song of Solomon, it is the most intimate of the inspired writings. The world is viewed as without. The sin of a believer is treated as a child’s offence against his Father, and is dealt with as a family matter (1:9; 2:1). The moral government of the universe is not in question. The child’s sin as an offence against the law had been met in the Cross, and ‘Jesus Christ the righteous’ is now his ‘Advocate with the Father.’ John’s Gospel leads across the threshold of the Father’s house; his first Epistle makes us at home there. A tender word is used for ‘children,’ teknia, ‘born ones,’ or ‘bairns.’ Paul is occupied with our public position as sons; John with our nearness as born-ones of the Father.” Scofield introduction

“It is a great, ever-memorable time that, when Christ first enters the heart, an object of faith and love [can you remember the time, when you were first saved? Not every born-again person can, and that’s okay]; but it is an equally important crisis when Christ, after having departed perhaps for a season [perhaps seemingly for years], leaving the mind clouded with doubt and the heart oppressed with sorrow, returns never to depart [this will be heaven, although some seemingly experience this in this life, at least in part], driving away wintry frosts and darkness, and bringing light, gladness, summer warmth, and spiritual fruitfulness to the soul. Verily one might be content that Christ, as he first knew Him [at the moment of salvation], should depart [that is, the sense of His sweet presence], for the sake of having his sorrow after a little while turned into such joy [I think Job was glad he went through

what he did, but only when it was all over]!” *The Training of the Twelve*, commentary on John 16:16-33, p.439

Monday-Thursday—prayerfully read I John in its entirety each day for four days (105 verses); or, read chapters 1-2 on Monday, 3 on Tuesday, 4 on Wednesday, and 5 on Thursday. Take with you a verse each day (to run through your mind), perhaps memorizing 1:7-10, taking one verse a day.

Look for **evidences of salvation**, and list them! Perhaps you would want to put circles by them as they appear to you (in the margin of your Bible), and then go back and number them and write them in the lines below. I will help you get started, in the next paragraph. (I see a total of fifteen evidences, but this will vary greatly among us!) Some of the evidences seem “redundant” (or “developmental”), so it will be a judgment call how you distinguish them. It is by examining our lives in comparison to these evidences that God gives assurance (3:19)—it is not by a direct infusion of feelings of assurance apart from these evidences. “**Security**” is the certainty that a born-again person is forever saved; “**assurance**” is the feeling that he is “safe for eternity.”

Perhaps the first evidence of salvation is “walking in the light” (or at least the desire to, 1:7-9). A second evidence (perhaps) is the evidence implied in verses 1:8-2:2, that we desire to have our (ever-present) sin dealt with. Another (“no question”) evidence is given in 2:3-5: “keeping His commandments” (at least a desire to do so and some evidence that they are being kept. I say “no question” because John writes “hereby we do know that we know Him”).

1. Walking in the light 1:7-9
2. Wanting to have our sins forgiven 1:8-2:2
3. Keeping His commandments 2:3-5
4. _____

5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Friday—prayerfully read again I John 1:1-4, and answer the following.

1. What “in general” was the writer (“we”) declaring unto those who were receiving this letter (1:1, 3)? _____

2. What specifically did the writer say “was manifested,” and what do you think he meant by that (1:2)? _____

3. What first reason did John give for writing them this letter (1:3)? _____
4. What second reason did John give for writing them this letter (1:4)? _____
5. Give something you can apply to your life from this section.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps reviewing 1:7-8.

Saturday—prayerfully read I John 1:5-10, and answer the following.

1. What message came through “loud and clear” from the Son (1:5)? _____

2. When do we lie (1:6)? _____

3. When do we have fellowship one with another (1:7)?

4. What “cleanses us from all sin,” and what also is necessary to be cleansed from “all unrighteousness” (1:7, 9)? _____

5. When do we deceive ourselves, and when do we make God a liar (1:8, 10)? _____

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps reviewing 1:9-10.

Sunday—prayerfully review your notes on I John.
Take a passage with you for the day, I John 1:7-10!

“we shall be like Him” (2:2)!
I John 2-3

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may [regard with pleasure] wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps.119:18)!

Remember to pray for Spirit-filling to understand and enjoy this study (Lk.11:13)!

Overview of I John (from “Jehovah-favored”)

Theme: family relationships of the believer, light/life/love

Outline: threads: evidences and assurance of salvation, walking in the light/keeping His commandments, loving the brethren, trying the spirits (2:18-28; 4:1-3; 5:10-believing on the Son); abiding in God’s light/basis of fellowship (1:1-2:27) and abiding in God’s love/behavior of fellowship (2:28-5:21) TTtB

Message to CBC: “walk in the light” (1:7; 2:9-10-loves his brother), enjoy eternal life (now) (2:25-promised us; 3:14-15-loves his brother; 5:11-13-God has given us), dwell in love (2:5/5:1-3-keep His word; 3:11/4:11-one another; 4:10-He loved us, 16-God is)

Key verses: 1:7-9; 2:15-17, 27; 3:2, 23; 4:16; 5:11-13

Commentary: *The Epistles of John*, ESV LSB

Place: universal (“in his car”), Ephesus? Patmos?

Time: 90 A.D. (Scof)

Monday—prayerfully read I John 2:1-11, and answer the following.

1. What reason does John give for writing these verses, and what is the “back-up” plan (2:1-2)? _____

2. What would indicate that Christ did not die just for “the elect” (2:2)? _____

3. What leads to the full effect (“perfected”) in our lives of the love of God (2:5)? _____
4. What do you suppose is the “old commandment,” and what do you suppose is the “new commandment” (2:7-8)? _____

5. Give something you can apply from these verses.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 2:1.

Tuesday—prayerfully read I John 2:12-20, and answer the following.

1-2. John gives reasons for writing three groups. What are the three groups, and what reasons does he give for writing each group? He repeats the listing, naming the three groups twice, and repeats some of the reasons (2:12-14). _____

3. What are we told not to love, and what three things are part of this thing we are not to love (2:15-16)? _____

4. What “time” is it, and what is part of this time (2:18)?

5. How do we know that certain ones are not with us, and how do we know all things (2:19-20)? _____

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 2:19.

Wednesday—prayerfully read I John 2:21-29, and answer the following.

1. Who is a liar, and who does he not have (2:22-23)? _____

2. What do you suppose were some of the things they had “heard from the beginning” which they were to let abide in them (2:24-25)? _____

3. What had they “received of Him” (God) which continued in them, and what do you suppose that was (and is) (2:27)?

4. Based on 2:27, how do you suppose we “shall abide in Him”?

5. Give something you can apply to your life from this section.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 2:27.

Thursday—enjoy reading I John 3:1-10, and answer the following.

1. What reveals God’s love to us (3:1)? _____

2. When shall we be (most) like Him, and why (3:2)?

3. How does this passage tell us not to wait to be like Him (3:2-3)? _____

4. Give the definition of sin found in 3:4. _____

5. Why was He manifested (made known to this world) (3:5), and how are the children of God manifested (made known) (3:9-10)? _____

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 3:2.

Friday—prayerfully read I John 3:11-16, and answer the following.

1. What message have we heard from the beginning (3:11)?

2. What should not cause us to marvel (3:13)?

3. Who is a murderer (3:15)?

4. How can we lay down our lives for the brethren (cf.3:16)?

5. Give something you can apply to your life from this section.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 3:16.

Saturday—prayerfully read I John 3:17-24, and answer the following.

1. What lets us know we are “of the truth” and helps us with feelings of assurance (of salvation) (3:17-19)?

2. What (do you suppose) is the meaning of 3:20? (These verses have comforted me greatly over the years, and I believe verse 19 is the key to understanding verse 20.)

3. What two factors are given in 3:22 pertaining to our prayers being answered?

4. What is the great two-fold commandment of 3:23 (which captures the two great responsibilities/privileges of the Christian)? _____

5. How do we “dwell in Him, and He in us” according to I John 3:24? _____
6. Take a verse with you for the day—I highly recommend I John 3:23!

Sunday—prayerfully review I John 2-3.
Take a passage with you for the day, I John 3:23!

“we have known and believed” (4:16)!
I John 4-5

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may [regard with pleasure] wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps.119:18)!

Remember to pray for Spirit-filling to understand and enjoy this study (Lk.11:13)!

Monday—prayerfully read I John 4:1-6, and answer the following.

1. How does John address the saved in I John 4:1 and then in verse 4? _____
2. What do you suppose John means by “spirit” (and “spirits”) in I John 4:1? _____

3. What is the test to identify the true spirit (“the Spirit of God”) (4:2)? _____

4. What is a second test to identify the “spirit of truth” (4:6)?

5. Give something you can apply to your life in this section.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, perhaps I John 4:1.

Tuesday—prayerfully read I John 4:7-13, and answer the following.

1. What is the evidence of salvation in 4:7 which is developed in this section (4:7-12)? (Not only is it an evidence, but it is commanded to be practiced in 4:21.) _____

2. What clause (group of words with both a subject and a verb) in 4:8 is repeated in 4:16, and is one of the first statements Christian parents teach their children? _____

3. What two benefits do we have resulting from God’s love in sending His Son (4:9-10)? _____

4. What evidence of salvation does John give us in 4:13?

5. Give something you can apply to your life in this section.

6. Take a verse with you for the day, one from this section that particularly blesses you.

Wednesday (July 18)—prayerfully read I John 4:14-21, and answer the following.

1. What (or who) do you suppose is the antecedent of “we” in 4:14? _____

2. What evidence of salvation is given in 4:15? _____

3. What evidence of salvation (“dwell[ing] in God, and God in Him”) is given in 4:16? _____

(bonus) What do you suppose is the antecedent (to what does it refer) of “Herein” in 4:16? _____

4. Whose love (do you suppose) casts out fear, in 4:18? Develop this thought a little, in the sense of how love might work to cast out fear. _____

5. Why do we love (Him and others), perhaps the only reason (4:19); and, how do we know we love God (4:20)? _____

6. Take a verse with you for the day, one from this section that particularly blesses you.

Thursday (July 19)—enjoy reading I John 5:1-6, and answer the following.

1. What evidence (sign) of salvation is given in 5:1, and what sign that we love God is given in this same verse?

2. How do we know that we love the children of God (5:2); and, what is said to be the love of God in 5:3? _____

3. What is (or will be) true of those who are born of God (5:4)?

4. What is given as our part in overcoming the world (5:4), and what (apparently) are we to believe to bring about this overcoming of the world (5:5)? _____
5. Who bears witness that Jesus came by “water and blood” (5:6)?

6. Take a verse with you for the day, one from this section that particularly blesses you, perhaps 5:4.

Friday—prayerfully read I John 5:7-13, and answer the following.

1. What three bear record in heaven, and what three on earth, and of what do you suppose they bear record (5:7-8)? _____
2. What do you suppose is “the witness of God” mentioned in 5:9? The answer perhaps is indicated in 5:10. _____
3. What do we do when we don’t believe God (5:10)? _____
4. What is the record in 5:11; that is, what is the antecedent of “this”? _____
5. What did John give as his reason for writing this letter in 5:13?

6. Take a verse with you for the day, one from this section that particularly blesses you, perhaps 5:13.

Saturday—prayerfully read I John 5:14-21, and answer the following.

1. What confidence can we have in Him (5:14)? _____

2. What (do you suppose) is “a sin unto death” mentioned in 5:16? _____

3. Give the definition of sin in 5:17. _____

4. When is the one born of God protected from “that wicked one” (5:18)? _____

5. What is given in 5:20 as a way “we may know Him that is true”? _____
6. Take a verse with you for the day, one from this section that particularly blesses you, perhaps 5:20.

Sunday—prayerfully review I John 4-5.

Take a passage with you for the day, perhaps 5:21!

“believe, love, obey” (3:23-24)!

I John “Spiral” Outline

The “Study Guide” assignment for this week is unprecedented, and portends great delight, especially for people who love the word of God and are willing to attempt something “stretching”!

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may [regard with pleasure] wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps.119:18)!

Remember to pray for Spirit-filling to understand and enjoy this study (Lk.11:13)!

Many have attempted to outline I John, and have come to different conclusions. Consider the following overview of this “dilemma.”

“The reader who attempts to identify a structural pattern in John’s first epistle comes quickly to the conclusion that he has undertaken no simple task. **The most helpful suggestions regarding the structure of I John begin by setting down the fact that John does not develop a careful scheme of logical reasoning.** Walter Conner has expressed this fact most strikingly by observing that John’s thought processes resemble those of a woman more than a man. He observes that ‘a man may take an hour to argue to a conclusion and prove the truth of a proposition. When he gets to his conclusion, he finds that the woman has been there all the time.’”

“Alfred Plummer divides the main body of the epistle into two sections: ‘God is light (1:5-2:28),’ and ‘God is love (2:29-5:12)’... [Others arrive at a three- or four- or more- point outline (one example of a thirteen-point outline is given), which are identified specifically by the author of this article.]

“[Some] have accepted the idea, first set forth in English by Robert Law, that **John’s organizational scheme resembles, not a straight line, but a spiral.** Law finds in the epistle a three-fold presentation of three ‘tests of life’ by which John’s readers may measure their true spiritual condition. He names these, using John’s key terms, the tests of **righteousness** [light?], of **love**, and of **faith** [life?]. Dividing the main body of the epistle into three cycles (1:5-2:28; 2:29-4:6; and 4:7-5:21), Law observes that each iteration [repetitions with slight variations] of the loop presents each of the three criteria by which John’s readers may test the genuineness of their claim to salvation. To the extent that their

lives reflect righteousness, love, and faith, they can be confident that they have been born again. [KH thinks that “righteousness, love, and faith” correspond to “light, love, and life.”] It is as though righteousness, love, and faith are the three points of an outline developing the theme of how one can know he is saved, and **John preaches through the outline three times** (each time through is what Law calls a cycle), with slightly different details and emphases each time.

“The effort to trace the intricate development of these three tests becomes somewhat confusing. Law likens John’s work to a musical composition in which the composer introduces a few melodic themes, which he then develops by restating them in various patterns of interrelationship. Based upon this view of first John’s structure, Law proceeds to trace through the epistle three themes, attempting to describe their varying relationships to one another from one passage to the next.

“Reading Law’s analysis may leave one with the feeling that he has robbed the epistle of its beauty, but the comparison with music may be carried another step and the charge dispelled. A musical composition may seem to lose its beauty under the analysis of the critic who reduces it to its elemental features for the sake of technical description. But the critic does not intend his description to replace the music itself; reading about its structure is no substitute for listening to the piece. Yet the listener who is aware of the elemental features of the piece understands it and appreciates its beauty much more fully than one who lacks this awareness. In the same way, a technical analysis of John’s first epistle may seem to obscure its force and beauty, but the analysis is not the ultimate goal. It is the means by which the reader may come more fully to appreciate the epistle’s virtues when he returns

to the text itself.” Randy Leedy, “The Structure of First John,”
Biblical Viewpoint, April, 1993

Trace the three themes of “righteousness, love, and faith” (light, love, and life) through this book, listing details, adding them as a crystal is formed. Take two days for each theme, using your own verse findings, or using the verses I’ve located for you! I’ve also begun each study to show a pattern you could follow.

Monday-Tuesday—righteousness (or light): 1:5-2:6; 2:29-3:10;
4:1-6.

God is light (1:5), if we walk in darkness we do not have fellowship with Him (1:6), our sins are forgiven us by His blood (1:7), we do have sin (1:8, 10), He will forgive that sin (1:9; 2:2), God writes His word to keep us from sinning (2:1); _____

Wednesday-Thursday—love: 2:7-17; 3:11-18; 4:7-21.

John is renewing the foundational commandment which they have heard from the beginning (I see 2:7-9 as a “drum roll” introduction to this second great theme of I John, which is “love of brethren”!); loving your brother (2:7-11); (perhaps 2:12-14 could be seen as an interlude in this symphony that illustrates John’s loving his brethren by giving them these words of encouragement as to why he wrote the book; perhaps 2:15-17 is a second interlude which

