

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

1st John Bible Study

The Seven Basics of An Amazing Christian Life

Bible Studies
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1st John Bible Study

The Seven Basics of An Amazing Christian Life

This booklet has been put together for you to use either

- in your own personal Bible Study time,
or...
- to help you lead a Bible Study discussion group.

It is divided into several lessons, usually covering one Bible chapter.

Each lesson has two (2) parts:

1. Questions for you to use as you read and think through the scripture.
2. Answers to those questions, with my comments and thoughts.

If you are leading a discussion group, I suggest making sure each member of your group has a copy of the next week's questions in advance, so that they can prepare if they want to. This is a great way to help everyone establish a habit of getting into the Word every day.

An online version of this study is available for free download at:
www.kathleeendalton.com

1st John Bible Study The Seven Basics of An Amazing Christian Life

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1st John – Introduction

“The Seven Basics of An Amazing Christian Life”

I knew about Jesus from the time I was a little girl. We were a church-going family. But I didn't genuinely believe in Jesus until I was 17. Once I came face-to-face with the truth that Jesus was real and alive and had died specifically for me I was totally in love with Him, and wanted to live the whole rest of my life with Him and for Him.

About a month after I came to this amazing turning-point in my life I faced a crisis. I had believed in Jesus while sitting in a church pew in a small Baptist church in Tucson, Arizona, on a Sunday morning. I had started attending that little church and meeting some of the teenagers in the church. I even started dating a really cute guy who worked with the teens at that church (who is now my husband of 47 years!☺). I trusted and loved the Pastor who had introduced me to Christ. My life was sweet and exciting – I had never known life could be this good – to know Jesus and walk with Him and have friends who did the same.

The crisis came when I realized I was still sinning every day! With such a great new life stretching out in front of me, and such happiness for a plain little 17-year-old girl, how could I blow everything by doing things I knew I shouldn't do?

I went through agony wondering if my ongoing sinfulness scratched my salvation out of the picture. Did I have to get saved again? Did I have to believe in Jesus each time I fell down and wanted to get back up?

The 7 Basics of An Amazing Christian Life:

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.
- 4. Love other Believers
- 5. Do Not Love the World
- 6. Look For His Return
- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

I figured the person who could help me sort this out was my Pastor...but I didn't want to admit to him that I had this problem. I was afraid he would look at me in horror and tell me there was no more hope. I was terrified he would tell me that if I had accepted Jesus as my Savior and then continued to sin...well....this wonderful Christian life was all over for me.

I can't help but smile at myself as I remember this crisis – almost 50 years ago. I finally decided I had to talk to my Pastor, but that I would do so without actually having to admit that I was the one wondering about my salvation. I decided it would be safer to tell him the guy I was dating (you know, the one working with the teens at church) was wondering about his salvation, and then I could see how he reacted to it and hopefully not ever have to admit that it was me who had lost the Christian life.

I know, that wasn't very nice of me – I mean – what if the Pastor had decided this wonderful guy I was dating couldn't work with the teens anymore because he was still a sinner? I didn't think of that. Turns out, though, that I needn't have worried about any of it. The Pastor saw right through me as I told my little fib and knew exactly who we were talking about who was afraid she had lost her salvation.

He solved my problem with a very short yet powerful verse of scripture. He didn't give me a whole lot of theology, or a lecture, or false hopes...he just said: "Look at *1st John chapter 5, verse 1*: "Whoever *believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*" Then he asked me, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?" And I said, "yes". Then he said, "Then you are born of God, and nothing can ever make you un-born."

And that was that. I left that little office in that little church building totally assured that my sins could never take away my relationship with Christ. I learned that my sins could make me feel bad, and that they would also make Jesus feel bad because He and I wouldn't have a whole lot of great fellowship until I admitted my sins and asked Him to forgive me. But, wonder of wonders, I learned that I would never lose my place in His family now that I was a believer. My belief would never die. And my salvation would never slip away.

The moment I believed in Jesus, at 17, I was "birthed" into a new family – and that family was forever. As soon as this was over I walked into the rest of my Christian life – 50 years now – never again to agonize, wondering if I could lose my new family and my eternal life with Jesus.

That was the first "basic" of living with Jesus I needed to learn.

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One of the things John was trying to do when he wrote this letter to some very dear friends of his was to help them know that when they believed in Jesus they inherited eternal life. Jesus was completely God and completely man and as such He, and only He, had the right to purchase our eternal life and then offer it to us as a free gift. And once anyone believed in Him and accepted His gift of eternal life, that eternal life was never going to go away. It was eternal. Period. That's the Gospel.

In John's day there were evil-minded men trying to confuse new believers about what the Gospel really was, and about who Jesus really was. John wrote this letter to set the record straight and teach his beloved readers seven basics, woven in and repeated over and over through the whole letter - seven basics which would propel them into fruitful, rich, confident, and satisfying lives with Christ. Here they are: After believing in Jesus, they would need to:

1. *...Know the Gospel.*
2. *...Walk with Jesus Every Day.*
3. *...Take Care of Sin Right Away.*
4. *...Love Other Believers.*
5. *...Do Not Love The World.*
6. *...Look for His Return.*
7. *...Be Confident – Because Jesus Will Never Lose You.*

The History:

- In the first few days of Jesus' ministry on earth, John was called to be one of Jesus' disciples. (John 1)
- During Jesus' 3 ½ years of ministry, John was part of a group of three men who were the closest to Jesus, the "inner circle". John, James & Peter.
- At the cross, Jesus asked John to take care of His mother, Mary, for the rest of her life. John agreed.
- John was an eyewitness to the resurrection, one of the first to see the empty tomb. He saw Jesus alive after the resurrection many times.
- When Paul was spreading the Gospel message, in the years following the start of the church, he warned a group of Pastors in *Acts 20:28-31* that men would rise up from within the ranks of the church to try to change the Gospel.
- Sometime before the temple was destroyed in Jerusalem by the Romans, John left Jerusalem with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and moved to Ephesus.

- In Ephesus, from about the age of 70, John pastored the church there and oversaw churches in the surrounding areas, wrote the Gospel of John and the 3 letters of John, of which 1st John is one.
- Near the end of his life, when he was perhaps 90, John was exiled to the Island of Patmos for his bold preaching of the Gospel, and there the Lord gave him visions of the end times, which he wrote in a book (Revelation) and sent to the churches he had overseen in the area of Ephesus.

The Truth - The Gospel

- Jesus always existed – He is God.
- Jesus was both perfect God and perfect man at the same time.
- Jesus did not ever sin. He was not a sinner.
- I have sinned. I am a sinner. I deserve to die because of my sin.
- Jesus died, even though He didn't deserve to, on a cross, shedding His own blood to pay the price for my sin.
- Jesus rose from the dead 3 days after He died on the cross.
- Jesus is alive today and is returning some day for all who believe in Him.
- Belief in Jesus means first admitting I need His gift of salvation because I can't be good enough for God by myself, and then accepting His gift of salvation.
- When I believe in Jesus, I am forever changed into His own dear child, and I will live with Him for eternity.

The Lies - Gnosticism

1. Everything physical is evil.
2. Everything spiritual is good.
Therefore: Christ couldn't have been physical. Christ entered Jesus the person at his baptism, and left before his crucifixion. Christ himself could never have died.
3. There is a "higher knowledge" for the super-intelligent, which is a greater knowledge than the Scriptures.
Therefore: The truly smart and spiritual person knows things which others cannot. Truth is not for the ordinary man. The truly smart and spiritual can decide which parts of the Scripture are true.

How & Why Did Gnosticism Try to Destroy the Gospel?

1. It was an attack on the humanity of Jesus, therefore an attack on the atonement. Jesus had to be fully man in order to pay the price for the sins of men. (*Hebrews 2:14-17*)

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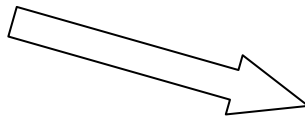
2. It caused people to doubt the Words of Jesus, since He called Himself, over and over, the “Son of Man”.
3. It gave Christians freedom to sin and not worry about it. Remember, they said: physical was evil and spiritual was good. Their idea was that sin in your physical body cannot affect your spirit, so go ahead and sin.
4. The liars gathered followers from the true church and pulled them into a separate group, thus hurting and shaking up and confusing believers who held to the true Gospel. The liars were most unloving in their cruelty to true believers.
5. Because of all the above, Gnostics were stealing the joy Jesus intended His followers to have.
6. Why would the Gnostics do all this? They wanted power to control the small groups of true believers whose churches were beginning to grow. They hated the truth – a hatred fostered in them by the one they truly served – Satan, the father of lies. (*John 8:44*)

1st John Chapter 1 – Questions

1. (:1-4) What is the “*that*” John is talking about in verses 1 and 3?
2. (:4) What is one of John’s purposes in writing this letter? (see also 5:13)
3. (:5) What does it mean: “*God is light*”? (also see *John 8:1-12* and *John 9*)
4. (:6) So...if we say we love Jesus, but live on the dark side, we are _____
(fill in the blank).
5. (:7) But, what’s the flip side of this?
6. (:8) Is there such a thing as a Christian who has grown so much in his walk with Christ that he has stopped sinning altogether?
7. (:9) So...what do I do when I do sin as a believer? Do I have to get saved all over again?
8. (:10) Is there any sinless person anywhere? Has there ever been? Mother Theresa? The Apostles? Martyrs? (see Romans 3:23)

Application Questions:

9. Christianity is personal between each person and Jesus. When did you and Jesus begin to have a relationship?
10. Are you walking in the light?
11. Are you passionate about sticking to “that which was from the beginning”? Or have you let half-truths or lies become a part of your understanding of the Gospel?
12. Which of the seven basics has John talked about in this chapter?



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1st John Chapter 1 – Answers

John was probably between 80 and 85 years old when he wrote his three letters to his friends in and around Ephesus. He had walked with Jesus through 3 ½ years of ministry. He had watched Him die on that cruel cross, where John promised to care for Jesus' Mother, Mary. And then 3 days later he had raced to the tomb to find Him risen from the dead on the first Easter morning.

John then spent the next 30 years or so helping to lead and guide the newly born Church in Jerusalem. When persecution got intense there, he and Mary escaped to the city of Ephesus.

In Ephesus John grew old while pastoring both the Ephesian church and the scattered believers in the areas surrounding Ephesus. By the time he wrote this 1st John letter he was loved and revered as the lone surviving apostle of Jesus. He was the single man left in the whole world that had seen Jesus, walked with Him, heard Him teach, hugged Him, and cried with Him.

When John spoke of Jesus, believers listened.

Here's what was happening: enemies of the church were confusing everyone. They were saying that Jesus hadn't really been a man – He was God, sure, but He hadn't actually been a flesh-and-blood man. They were saying that Jesus just sort of took on the look of a man, like a costume, but that He was never actually a man.

To new believers this lie sort of made sense....I mean....how could Jesus, who was God, have ever have let people kill Him? The liars said He didn't actually die – He just let people believe He had, but actually He had left that body right before death, and then come back afterward.

The liars said that anything physical was bad, and anything spiritual was good, so therefore Jesus could never have been physical.

The liars also said that once a person was saved they were no longer physical people, but instead they were spiritual people – so anything they did in their physical bodies didn't actually count...so go ahead and sin.

You see what they were doing? They weren't actually denying Jesus was God...they were just saying He wasn't the Christ, the Promised One. They were saying He wasn't the Son of Man. They were saying He wasn't the perfect man who had the right to die on the cross and purchase our salvation.

They were mixing a little truth with a little lie, and then a little more lie, and then a little more lie – until people was unsure what to believe. Everyone began to doubt Jesus Himself, since He said He was the Christ, and He said He was the Son of Man, and He said He was a man, and He said He had actually died and He had paid the price for sin.

If everything Jesus had said was to be doubted, then...well...then...how could anyone take that step of faith and believe in Him?

But remember, there was still one aging, respected Apostle of Jesus Christ alive on earth, and this Apostle could affirm, quite strongly, that Jesus was God (he was an eye-witness to His resurrection), and that Jesus was, indeed, a physical man (He had seen Him, heard Him, smelled Him, touched Him, wept with Him.)

This letter is John's strong and simple statement of what was True...so that the liars would have to slither back into the holes from which they had emerged.

1. (:1-4) What is the “*that*” John is talking about in verses 1 and 3?

Like a family history drawing on memories and pictures and letters and news articles, these first words of John in this letter are sweeping and poignant. The “that” is of course Jesus – whom John had seen with his own young eyes, looked upon for 3 ½ years of walking together, and handled with his own hands. But the “that” is also the whole Gospel message, and all the miracles, and all the words and the whole meta-narrative of the Savior/Messiah who was prophesied for 4,000 years and then appeared on earth – fully God and fully man – the promised Son of God/Son of Man.

If that wasn't enough, John goes on to make the point, in verse 3, that everyone who knows the story of Jesus and believes it in all of its truth, is part of the greater family of God, and each of those people has “fellowship” one with another. There is no fellowship where there is no agreement on who Jesus is.

2. (:4) What is one of John's purposes in writing this letter? (see also 5:13)

His purpose: that the believers who would read this letter would have full, complete joy - the kind of joy that comes from being absolutely sure of what you believe and Who you believe in. In Chapter 5:13, John restates this: “*These*

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things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

In verse 4 John says he wants the joy of his much beloved friends to be "full". Peter describes this kind of joy as "inexpressible", or "unspeakable". *"...Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:8*

What does that mean? "Inexpressible"?

I think it might mean a joy which simmers around the edges of your life and doesn't even have to get mentioned. It's just there. In the unhappy times, the depressing times, the fearful times, the anguished times, it's still there. It's not the joy of jumping around or shouting or dancing. It's the inexpressible joy – the joy that is so much a part of you, you cannot separate it from who you are.

That kind of joy is deep and doesn't go away...even when you don't feel it. It's just there – a never-leaving part of you that has grown as you understand more and more, over time, just how much Jesus did for you. It's a joy which came as you learned, through rough experiences with those who would hurt you for your faith, that He would never leave you or forsake you. It came through learning that the words most worth suffering for were words about Jesus and His story.

Inexpressible joy. Unspeakable joy. You don't work it up within yourself. It overtakes you when you understand the Gospel.

3. (:5) What does it mean: "*God is light*"? (also see *John 8:1-12* and *John 9*)

It's not just that God has a light He shines in dark places. It's bigger than that. God actually is the light. When He enters any place or any situation, light fills the dark corners and it becomes obvious what is right and what is true.

In *John 8:1-12* Jesus was the light – and in His presence it became clear who the sinners were and who was the Righteous One. A woman was committing adultery, probably a prostitute. To the self-righteous it seemed so simple – expose her for what she was doing! Punish her! Use her to make Jesus look like a charlatan! But In His light everyone knew there was forgiveness for sin, but no tolerance for the ones who only wanted to bully people into doing things their way by pretending to be religious.

In *John 9* Jesus healed a man blind from birth. The blind man believed in Jesus before he even had a chance to see Him and thank Him. The light – God – is so brilliant that even the blind can see. Even those who think they can see suddenly realize how blind they've been.

4. (:6) So...if we say we love Jesus, but live on the dark side, we are lying.

John is not mincing words here. If anyone says they are walking with Jesus, but are living a life the opposite of what Jesus would want, and feels no remorse over it, that person is most certainly not walking with Jesus. They are lying about their love for Christ.

You cannot love Jesus and also love the things He hates. Why? Because God is light. Jesus is light. And He won't have anything to do with darkness. So if we are walking with Him, He's going to make us feel horrible about our sin and chase the darkness out of our lives. If that's not happening – we aren't walking with Him.

For instance:

- If two young people say they love the Lord, and are living together before marriage, they don't love the Lord. They might love religion or church or their Christian friends, or their fun life, but they don't love Jesus. Why? Because He hates sin...and living together without marriage is just that...sin.
- If someone who claims to believe in Jesus tells either big or little lies and does not want to change, that someone doesn't love Jesus. Why? Because Satan is the father of lies (*John 8:44*). Jesus is truth and light.
- If a person who calls themselves a Christian but consistently hates or is mean to other Christians, that person does not love Jesus. Why? Because "they will know we are Christians by our love" (*John 13:34&35*)
- If a Christian attends a church because it's the fun place to be, or the "in" place to be, or the "church they grew up in", but that church teaches things which are not true, then that Christian isn't in love with Jesus. Jesus died for the true church. Jesus is the true Gospel. A church which teaches falsehood is not something He would want anyone to be a part of.

5. (:7) But, what's the flip side of this?

We just said, If we say we're walking with Jesus but still love our sin, we're lying.

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On the flip side, if we really are walking with Jesus, we will naturally begin to love the things He loves. If anyone is truly a believer in Jesus, and is walking with Him, that person loves others who are also believers in Jesus, and wants to fellowship with them. And that believer learns each step of the way how to live the kind of life Jesus wants him to live. And that believer is constantly confessing sin and experiencing the joy of many, many fresh starts.

6. (:8) Is there such a thing as a Christian who has grown so much in his walk with Christ that he has stopped sinning altogether?

No.

Remember, the liars who were trying to muck up the Gospel were saying that once you became a believer you didn't have to worry about sin anymore because you were now a spiritual person and whatever you did with your body didn't count. You could go ahead and do sinful things. So John is making it very clear here that that is absolutely not true.

Once you become a Christian you have a new nature. This new nature wants to live for Jesus and do the things Jesus loves. But you also still have an old nature...that part of you that always wanted to sin in the past. These two parts of you are going to be struggling within you until the day you die and join the Lord in heaven and receive your brand-new resurrected body – a body that will never sin again. Until that time, yes, you will sin (but you won't feel good about it and won't be able to keep sinning without feeling guilt.)

7. (:9) So...what do I do when I sin as a believer? Do I have to get saved all over again?

This is bad news/good news.

The bad news: you will sin. You will feel horrible about it. It will wreck your sweet fellowship with Jesus.

The good news: you will get to go to Jesus right away and say you're sorry. You might feel like waiting to admit it to Jesus because you're proud or because you're ashamed. But the sooner you meet with Him and let Him point out your sin, the sooner everything will be OK between the two of you again. When you repent, He removes the wall you had put up between the two of you.

The word "confess" means "agree together with". In other words, when you are a believer already, and you sin, you don't have to "ask for forgiveness" over and

over again – you’ve truly already been forgiven forever. But what you do have to do is agree with God that, yes, that thing was a sin (and ask Him to help you change so that you do not do it again). That’s confessing.

More good news - in the whole process of sin/confession you never lose your salvation! Yes, you do lose your sweet fellowship with Jesus, so you will want to get it back right away! And, more good news, getting it back is not complicated. Just agree with Him you were wrong and slip back into your wonderful walk together again.

Why don’t you have to get saved all over again when you sin? Because every sin you ever sinned, and every sin you ever will sin were all paid for on the cross. When Jesus died on the cross He carried every single one of your past, present and future sins with Him.

When you believe in Jesus you accept His gift of salvation – the gift He earned for you on the cross. That salvation is eternal – not just until you sin again – but forever.

If sin could steal your salvation, you’d lose it in a nano-second!

8. (:10) Is there any sinless person anywhere? Has there ever been?
Mother Theresa? The Apostles? Martyrs? (see *Romans 3:23*)

God has said throughout the scriptures that all people are sinners: *Psalms 14:3, 51:5, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:10-19, 3:23, 6:23.*

No person on earth has ever been sinless....except Jesus. No one ever gets to the point that they never sin again in this life. *“For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23*

The most amazing, loving, spiritual person you can think of was at one time simply a sinner who needed to be saved by Jesus, and who needs now to walk with Him and confess sin and fill themselves with His Words every day in order see where to keep making changes so that sin doesn’t take over their life.

Sinless? – not in this life. But, more good news, in this life we also haven’t been left to be slaves in the hopeless grip of sin!

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That's why we need the true Gospel. Because - here's the amazing power of the Gospel:

A Believer Understanding the Truth about Jesus (The Gospel)
becomes

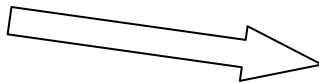
A Believer who wants to please and obey Jesus
who becomes

A Believer with more and more love for Jesus and for other true
Believers
who becomes

A Believer Overtaken by Joy

Application Questions:

9. Christianity is personal between each person and Jesus. When did you and Jesus begin to have a relationship?
10. Are you walking in the light?
11. Are you passionate about sticking to "that which was from the beginning"? Or have you let half-truths or lies become a part of your Gospel?
12. Which of the seven basics has John talked about in this chapter?



**The Basics Covered in
Chapter 1:**

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away
- 4. Love Other Believers

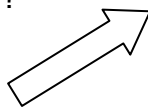
1st John Chapter 2:1-17 – Questions

1. (:1) Why does John call his readers “*little children*”?
2. (:1) We’ve seen that one of John’s purposes in writing this letter was so his readers would have joy. What is another of his reasons for writing this?
3. (:1) Does John want his readers to sin? Does he think they will?
4. (:1&2) What does Jesus do when we sin as believers?
5. (:2) Are there some people in the world who do not deserve to have the salvation Jesus offers?
6. (:2) Are there some Christians who do not deserve to have Jesus stand up for them in the heavenly court and proclaim their justification?
7. (:3&4) What is one proof that I am a Christian? Does that mean I am worthy to be a Christian because I am obedient?
8. (:5) What does “*the love of God is perfected in him*” mean?
9. (:6) What does “*abide in Him*” mean? What does “*walk just as He walked*” mean?
10. (:7-9) John is going to remind his readers of an old commandment and a new commandment...and they are both the same. What is this old/new commandment? Why does he call it both old and new?

11. (:10&11) What is one proof we are not walking in the light?
12. (:12-14) How many different groups of people is John writing to? How does he feel about them? What does this tell you about John?
13. (:15-17) What is another proof that we are walking in the light?

Application Questions:

14. Do you have a clear idea of what the Gospel is?
15. Are you walking every day with Jesus?
16. Do you realize you are a sinner even after you are saved?
17. Do you have the good habit of getting sin admitted to God right away?
18. Do you love other Christians?
19. Are you fellowshiping with other Christians?
20. Do you hate any other Christians?
21. Is there any younger Christian you could reach out to and help that Christian learn to walk in the light?
22. Do you love the world less and less?
23. Which of the seven basics has John talked about in this passage?



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1st John Chapter 2:1-17 – Answers

1. (:1) Why does John call his readers “little children”?

John loves these people...loves them like a father would love his little children. These readers are adults, of course, but they are people John wants to instruct and protect, and help grow to maturity. John feels about them just like any of us feel about our little guys who produce the “*pitter patter of little feet on the living room rug*”. (Words from an old song from my early-parenthood days – can’t remember the rest of it...)

The point? John loves these people. He’s their pastor. Pastors love their people. He’s going to protect them and shield them with the words he is writing to them.

2. (:1) We’ve seen that one of John’s purposes in writing this letter was so his readers would have joy. What is another of his reasons for writing this?

He doesn’t want them to sin. Let’s ask ourselves a couple of questions to get this whole “sin” topic off to a good start:

- (from 1st John 1:8-10) Are we all sinners? (also *Romans 3:23*)
Yes.
- 2:1 Does God want us to sin?
No.
- 2:1 Is sin inevitable, so why even try to stop sinning?
Yes, we will sin until the day we die. But we are not doomed to live as slaves of sin. We can choose to be slaves, instead, of righteousness. *Romans 6:18 “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”*

- 2:1 Can I lose my salvation by sinning?
No. If sin could steal your salvation, you would only be saved for a “nano-second”.
- 2:1 Should we go ahead and sin since we are covered by grace?
Grace doesn’t give us a freedom to sin. Just the opposite! Grace gives us the freedom to not sin.

3. (:1) Does John want his readers to sin? Does he think they will?

The loving Pastor, John, does not want his readers to sin. He knows the terrible results of sin, and that continuing in sin will steal the sweet fellowship with Jesus every believer needs and deeply wants.

Does he think they will sin? Yes. So he goes on to tell these dear believers what happens when they sin.

4. (:1&2) What does Jesus do when we sin as believers?

I can’t say this often enough. At the moment you or I believe in Jesus all of our sins are washed away forever – all of our past sins, present sins, and future sins. All of them. Those sins can never again affect our eternity. We belong to Jesus forever from that moment on.

So, after I have believed in Jesus, what happens when I sin?

Several things:

First of all, that sin puts up a wall between you and Jesus. You are still His child, He is still your Savior, but you can’t have sweet times together because there is something between you. To get that wall removed you have to “confess” (admit that what God has said about your sin is true – it is wrong –, say you’re sorry, and ask Him to help you change).

What else happens when you or I sin after we are believers? It is best explained as a courtroom scene:

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Let's pretend I have told a lie.

- The Judge – God Himself
- The Accused – me
- The Prosecutor (Accuser)– Satan
- The Defense (Advocate) – Jesus
- The Law – The Bible, God's own code of right and wrong

The law has been broken by my lie. When my lie is compared to the righteous requirement of the law, there is no doubt I have done what is wrong. The Judge (God the Father) looks at my lie and clearly states that I have broken the law. The Prosecutor (Satan) stands before the Judge and demands that I be punished for the lie. I do deserve the punishment.

But the Defense (Jesus) stands up before the Judge and the Prosecutor and declares that the punishment for my lie has already been paid for. He (Jesus) states simply and quietly that He Himself has already taken my punishment and the lie I told is not to be counted against me. It should have been, and it would have been – but because He took my punishment, the lie is gone from my records and has been since the moment I believed in Him.

Jesus “advocates” for us whenever we sin as believers. He steps in and says “No!” to our punishment for our sin, because the punishment has already happened.

5. (:2) Are there some people in the world who do not deserve to have the salvation Jesus offers?

This is a trick question. The answer is yes, there are. In fact, no one deserves the salvation Jesus offers – but it is free to everyone, if they want it.

6. (:2) Are there some Christians who do not deserve to have Jesus stand up for them in the heavenly court and proclaim their justification?

Again, a trick question. The answer is yes, there are. Again, no believer deserves to have Jesus as their advocate – but, deserve it or not, we have it.

Before we leave verse 2, I'd like to talk about the meaning of the word “*propitiation*”. *“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”* Most of us have no idea what the word means, so again I'd like to use a courtroom scene to help us out: (same courtroom, same people)

This time I have been accused of stealing, cheating on my taxes, and threatening someone with a deadly weapon. There is no doubt in the mind of the Judge that I have, indeed, done these things. The Prosecutor stands up in the face of the Judge and accuses me of breaking the law and demands that I be punished. I have broken the law, and I deserve to be punished.

The penalty for each of these offenses is:

- Stealing – 2 years in prison.
- Cheating on my taxes – 3 years in prison.
- Threatening someone with a deadly weapon – 10 years in prison.

According to the Prosecutor, I must spend 15 years in prison for these offenses.

By now, you know what happens next. The Defense (my Advocate, Jesus) stands up before the Judge and Satan and me and produces proof that long ago He (Jesus) already spent those 15 years in prison, knowing that someday I would do these awful things. Jesus hadn't done anything wrong Himself, but he willingly volunteered to spend 15 years in a dreadful prison so that at this moment, in this court, I could go free.

The Judge looks at the proof that Jesus offers, and declares the law "satisfied." No punishment of me is necessary. The law cannot ask for any more punishment – it has already been delivered. Propitiation means "satisfaction". Jesus is the propitiation (satisfaction) for each and every one of my sins.

7. (:3&4) What is one proof I am a Christian? Does that mean I am worthy to be a Christian because I am obedient?

One proof, or sign, of my genuine faith in Jesus is that I do what He has told me to do. I obey. My obedience doesn't make me worthy – it is just proof that I am a believer. Nothing I could do would ever make me worthy.

8. (:5) What does "*the love of God is perfected in him*" mean?

The verse simply means that when I willingly obey the commands of Jesus, I am being completed as a believer. I am growing. I am becoming more and more what He always knew I could be.

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9. (:6) What does “*abide in Him*” mean? What does “*walk just as He walked*” mean?

“Abide in Him” has the same meaning as “walking with Him”. It means I am intentionally spending time with Him, reading His Words, and letting Him change me.

If I am abiding in Him, then I will be more and more often doing the things He likes, because I am growing closer and closer to Him every day. I am beginning to want what He wants and love what He loves.

When I abide in Jesus I start to change from the naturally selfish person I have always been. I begin to become the God-centered person He always knew I could be. I can’t do that without abiding in Him, because only He can change me to be more like Himself. I can’t change myself.

10. (:7-10) John is going to remind his readers of an old commandment and a new commandment...and they are both the same. What is this old/new commandment? Why does he call it both old and new?

If we love Jesus, we will obey Him, right? And what had Jesus told His believers to do even during His ministry on earth? (see *John 15:9-12*)

Verses 9 & 10 give us the answer: Love your brothers and sisters in Christ. In other words, love other believers. You can’t love other believers without knowing them and spending time with them, so, practically, the Lord is telling us through John to find a fellowship of believers, a church, and become a faithful part of it. Give to them. Help them. Overlook their faults. Show mercy to them. Serve them.

If we say we love Jesus, but have no desire to spend time with or be kind to other believers (who are just as dysfunctional as we are), then something is wrong with us.

11. (:10&11) What is one proof that we are not walking in the light?

If I hate other Christians, either I am not a believer at all myself, or I am a believer who is living in sin, blinded by sin, and not walking with Jesus.

12. (:12-14) How many different groups of people is John writing to? How does he feel about them? What does this tell you about John?

The love is so evident, right?

As we would say today, John is writing to every market segment. ☺ Seniors. Parents of teens. Parents of toddlers. Singles. Couples. Teens. Children. Spiritually mature. Spiritual “newbies”.

The point? John is writing to churches. Churches are filled with people of every age and background and experience.

John loves them all. This love doesn't come from John, himself. John was one of the “Sons of Thunder”, remember? (*Mark 3:17*) Jesus nicknamed him a “Son of Thunder” because John's personality started out loud and brash and self-centered as a young man.

But this love John exhibits for a wide spectrum of people is a result of walking with Jesus all of his adult life. John has been changed – he's more the man Jesus always wanted him to be. He loves these people!

13. (:15-17) What is another proof that we are walking in the light?

The next proof of abiding in Jesus? Less love for the world all the time.

What does love for the world mean? John breaks it down:

- Lust of the flesh (things your flesh desires, like sex, food, drink, health, family)
- Lust of the eyes (things your eyes see and want, like good looks, nice cars)
- Pride of life (things your pride wants, like acclaim, reputation, everybody likes me)

The illustrations I have used above for each of these categories are not necessarily bad things. Sex in itself isn't bad, unless you are engaging in sex God forbids. Food, drink, good health, a family, good looks, nice cars, reputation – these things are good – unless you are willing to sin to get them, and begin to love them more than you love God.

God doesn't ask us to hate the world. He asks us to not love it.

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Changing from within so that you love the world less and less is a sign that you are walking with Him.

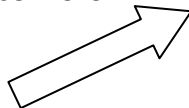
Little children – as your feet pitter-patter through the life God has given you – are you walking with Jesus? Is it showing?

Application Questions:

14. Do you have a clear idea of what the Gospel is?
15. Are you walking every day with Jesus?
16. Do you realize you are a sinner even after you are saved?
17. Do you have the good habit of getting sin admitted to God right away?
18. Do you love other Christians?
19. Are you fellowshiping with other Christians?
20. Do you hate any other Christians?
21. Is there any younger Christian you could reach out to and help that Christian learn to walk in the light?
22. Do you love the world less and less?
23. How many of the seven basics were talked about in this passage?

**The Basics Covered in
Chapter 2:1-17:**

- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.
- 4. Love other Believers
- 5. Do Not Love the World

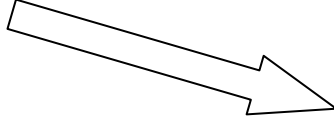


1st John Chapter 2:18-29 – Questions

1. (:18) Why does John say “*it is the last hour*”? Is he talking about the 2nd coming of the Lord? And if so, why would he call it “*the last hour*” then, when we know it still hasn’t happened yet, after almost two thousand years?
2. (:18) Who is the Antichrist? Who are “many antichrists”?
3. (:18-23) What basic thing do we need to know in order to not love the world?
4. (:19) Who was it who “*went out from us*”? Does this mean that anyone who leaves our church is against God because they are not with us?
5. (:20&21) Is understanding the Bible and God just too hard for an ordinary person who has never studied the Bible before?
6. (:22&23) What is the one, solid proof that any person is antichrist?
7. (:24-27) What will keep us safe from false teachers?
8. (:28&29) “*Abide in Him*”....how do I do that?
9. (:28) What does John mean here when he says “*at His coming*”?

Application Questions:

10. What “basics” were talked about in this passage?



The 7 Basics of An Amazing Christian Life:

- 1. Know the Gospel

- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day

- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.

- 4. Love other Believers

- 5. Do Not Love the World

- 6. Look For His Return

- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

1st John Chapter 2:18-29 – Answers

Here's a Question to start us out: What things do you think you have in common with believers in Jesus who lived 2,000 years ago? Make a list.

1. (:18) Why does John say "*it is the last hour*"? Is he talking about the 2nd coming of the Lord? And if so, why would he call it "*the last hour*" when we know it still hasn't happened yet, after almost two thousand years?

John said this sixty years after the resurrection. Yes, he's talking about Jesus' 2nd Coming.

Was it actually the "last hour", then? Yes, in the same sense that it is now the "last hour" in 2014. No one has ever known how long that last hour would be. We live with expectancy because that is how He wants us to live. His return is always imminent. Meaning: it could come at any time.

So here's something we have in common with our brothers & sisters in Christ who lived in a different world, a different culture, two thousand years ago: we all have lived with the urgency that the time we are living in is the "last hour". Believers in John's time thought a lot about the return of the Lord. Of course they did....it was the "last hour".

Do you think much about His return? If you don't, something is wrong. That urgent expectancy is a normal part of the Christian life.

2. (:18) Who is "*the Antichrist*"? Who are "*many antichrists*"?

"The Antichrist" is who you think he is. He's the man who, in the end times, is indwelt by Satan and leads the whole world in total rebellion against Jesus Christ.

“Many antichrists” are various men who have lived in the last two thousand years – they have been “against Christ” at many different times in history. They haven’t had the title “Anti-Christ”, but they have had the same goal: minimize or destroy the ability of Jesus Christ to save souls and change lives.

All “antichrist” thinking is based on making man big, and Jesus Christ small.

All antichrists in the past have failed and the final Antichrist will fail, too.

3. (:18-23) What basic thing do we need to know in order to not love the world?

Here’s what we need to know: Jesus is God. The world does not want to admit this, in fact, the world pushes hard against this fact, and tries to destroy anyone who believes it.

It may be a struggle to actively proclaim this truth, because often we are cowards. But for a true believer it is not hard to believe it...it’s intuitive. The fact that Jesus is God is the whole basis of Christianity. If you struggle with whether or not Jesus is God, you are not a Christian yet.

4. (:19) Who was it who “*went out from us?*” Does this mean that anyone who leaves our church is against God because they are not with us?

This is talking specifically of those who did not believe Jesus was God in John’s time and in John’s church. The trouble-makers told many lies, trying to convince others in the church that Jesus was not truly God. They eventually walked away from the fellowship of the church John was pastoring, thus showing their true colors. They did not believe Jesus was God.

If anyone, through all the two thousand years since then, has left a church for that very same reason, then, yes, this describes them, too.

5. (:20&21) Is understanding the Bible and God just too hard for an ordinary person who has never studied the Bible before?

No! We can know and learn truth because our teacher is the Holy Spirit. He lives within us. He wrote the Words of the Bible, and He can help us understand them. (see also 2:27)

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6. :22&23 What is the one, solid proof that any person is antichrist?

Anyone who denies that Jesus is God is antichrist. Anyone who minimizes the free gift of salvation offered by Jesus is antichrist.

7. (:24-27) What will keep us safe from false teachers?

The thing which keeps us safe from false teachers is *“that which was from the beginning”*. In other words, the whole, true Gospel. The Bible.

If we know the Gospel thoroughly, if we are constantly seeking and learning the truth of the whole Bible, we have protection from the lies of the false teachers.

The Holy Spirit who lives within us will teach us and set off warning bells in our minds when we are hearing false teaching. That’s His job. He protects the truth about Jesus. (*John 16:5-15*)

Just from my own experience, here are some warning signs of false teachers:

- a. False teachers don’t want you to learn it for yourself. They try to make you think you are not smart enough learn it, or you don’t have enough education to learn it...so just trust them to know what the truth is.
- b. False teachers don’t always tell out and out lies. Most of the time they take what is true and twist it. Remember – if it sounds different from what you’ve always heard, take a while to compare it to the Word of God before you jump in.
- c. False teachers often use words which mean one thing to you, but something entirely different to them. Example: they will talk about Jesus as if they believe in Him, but they don’t believe He’s God. Always ask whether or not they believe Jesus is the One and only God – no other God besides Him.
- d. False teachers may talk about salvation by grace, but they believe you have to do something yourself in order to earn grace. If grace is earned it is not grace. (grace means free).

There are more warning signs – many people smarter than me have written terrific books on how to refute some of the major false teachings of our day.

Just keep it simple. Remember:

- Jesus is God. The One and Only God.
- Salvation from Jesus is a gift, not something I can earn or qualify for.
- When I believe what God has said, that's Faith.
- Faith is not a feeling – it's a decision to believe what God has said.

8. (:28&29) “*abide in Him*”....how do I do that?

Remember, “abiding in Him” is the same as “walking with Him”. It's a 24-7 personal relationship with Jesus Christ Himself.

- Talk to Him – Prayer.
- Listen to Him – read your Bible.
- Do what He says - Obedience.

Make intentional efforts to love the things He loves. Learn the Word so you can see things the way He sees them. Talk to Him all the time. Deal with sin immediately.

Here's the really fantastic part of abiding in Jesus. You don't have to do it on your own. The Holy Spirit within you wants you to abide in Jesus even more than you want to. He will prompt you, teach you, bring good teachers into your life, settle you in a church, hover over you when you are considering sin, relentlessly pursue you when you have sinned, and open your eyes to sin you never even realized you were doing.

Some day you will stand before Jesus and say: “I'm so glad I learned a little bit of how to abide in You while I was on earth – but the credit is Yours for helping me do it!”

If you are raising children who believe in Jesus, or are shepherding other believers, this work of the Holy Spirit is what will keep you peacefully trusting in Jesus even when your children or your “little lambs” don't seem to be getting it. He is in them, doing the same thing He is doing in you – teaching them to abide in Jesus. Do what He asks you to do for them, and then trust Him for the rest.

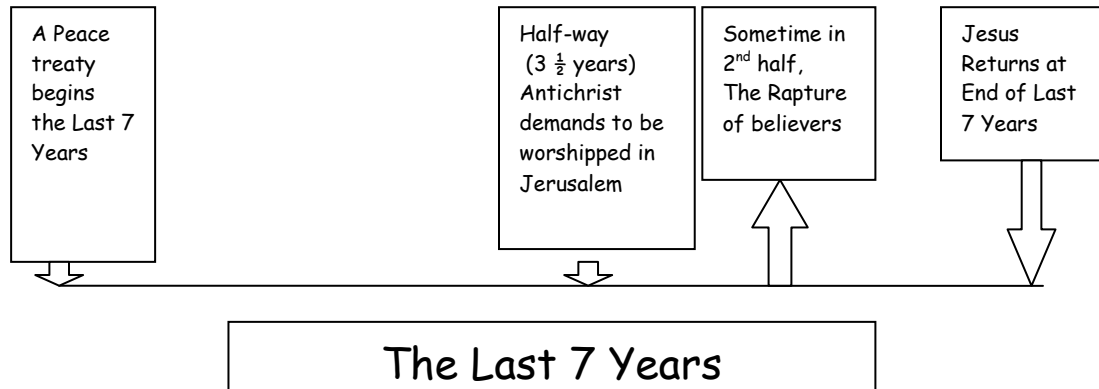
9. (:28) What does John mean here when he says “*at His coming*”?

Let's talk about the Coming of the Lord, because verse 28 says something very practical for us about what “abiding in Him” has to do with His Coming:

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Let's ask first of all – what is meant by “*when He appears*”, and “*His coming*”?

Following is a simple timeline which I use when I want to think through events in the end times: (There are many more events than these 4, but these are the main ones)



1. He begins His Return, or His Coming, at the beginning of the last 7 years when He allows the Antichrist to usurp the power to start to control the whole earth. (*Daniel 9:27, Revelation 6:1&2*)
2. In the middle of the last 7 years (3 ½ years) Jesus allows the Antichrist to demand that the whole world worship him in Jerusalem. (*Revelation 13:3-5*)
3. Sometime after that 3 ½ mark, Jesus snatches the church up out of the world because they are being wiped out through persecution. (*Matthew 24:22*) At that time He also snatches up those who have believed in Him through all time – and He gives them all new physical, resurrected bodies (the bodies they will have for the rest of eternity). (*1st Thessalonians 4:15-18, Revelation 7:9-17*)
4. Then He actually physically arrives on earth (riding the white horse) at the end of the last 7 years. (Raptured believers with Him) (*Revelation 19:11-16*)

This whole series of events - the entire 7 years - can be described as “His Coming”.

Here's what I think: John is saying that if we are abiding in Him at the time He begins the Last 7 Years (the peace treaty) we will not have to be ashamed of our

inaction and uselessness to Him. We are useless as His ambassadors when we are not abiding in Jesus.

John is also saying that we will have the ability to be “boldly outspoken” about what is happening when He starts His Coming – if we are abiding in Christ at the time.

If we aren’t abiding in Christ when His return begins, we’re going to be ashamed and we’re going to have to start abiding in Him right away so that we can begin to play our parts in this great and powerful time in history.

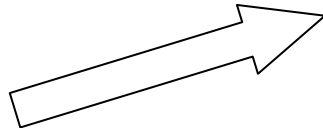
Now, jump ahead for a minute to chapter 3, verse 2. John is not through with his thoughts on Jesus’ Coming. He keeps talking about it all the way through 3:4.

In 3:2 John reminds us of what will happen when we finally do see the face of Jesus. When we finally do actually see Him, we will be changed to be totally like Him. We can’t even imagine what we will be like!

So, putting our arms around this whole passage, from 2:28 – 3:4, let’s summarize: Abide in Christ right now, little children, because He may just begin His return at any moment, and if He does, you don’t want to be caught not walking with Him. You’ll be ashamed if you are. And then have hope, little children, because some day, one way or the other, you will see His face, and then, oh wow! You have no idea what you will be like then!

Application Questions:

10. What “basics” did John focus on in this passage?



The Basics Covered in Chapter 2:18-29:

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.
- 4. Love other Believers
- 5. Do Not Love the World
- 6. Look For His Return
- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

1st John Chapter 3 – Questions

1. (:1) When does anyone become a “child of God”?
2. (:1-3) What 3 things are true of children of God?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. (:4-9) What is a 4th thing which is true of children of God?
4. (:10-15) What is a 5th thing which is true of children of God?
5. (:16-18) So....what does love look like?
 - a. :16
 - b. :17
 - c. :18
6. (:19-20) What gives us assurance that we are walking with God? Is there an outward sign that tells us we are doing this right? Answered prayer? Good things happening in our lives? Feeling happy?
7. (:21-23) The word “confidence” means “bold outspokenness”. Read this verse and insert that phrase “bold outspokenness”. What does that mean? Does that change your prayers at all?

8. (:24) I abide in Christ and He abides in me. Is Christ in me no matter what? Am I abiding in Christ no matter what? Can I remove myself from walking with Christ? Will He remove Himself from living in me? How can I know for sure He has not left me?

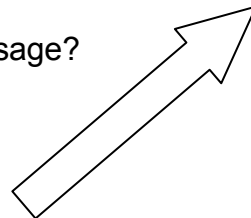
Application Questions:

9. What does your walk with Christ look like?
10. Do you sometimes forget to talk to Jesus about everything?
11. Do you sometimes let sin go unconfessed for a long time?
12. Do you have past sins you need to confess?
13. Do you make efforts to love others? To do things for them?
14. Do you sometimes find yourself being harsh or losing your temper with other Christians? How can you change that?
15. What have you done this week to love another, not wanting anything back for yourself?

**The 7 Basics of An
Amazing Christian Life:**

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.
- 4. Love other Believers
- 5. Do Not Love the World
- 6. Look For His Return
- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

16. What “basics” did John focus on in this passage?



1st John Chapter 3 – Answers

1. (:1) When does anyone become a “*child of God*”?

At first glance we might think this verse is teaching that whenever the love of God is bestowed on someone they are then a child of God. Sounds OK, right? So...that must mean everyone is a child of God, since God loves everyone, right?

But comparing this passage to other scripture will tell us the above conclusion is faulty.

God does love everyone – He loves the whole world (*John 3:16*), and He is not willing that any should perish. (*2nd Peter 3:9*). Then, other scriptures fill out the whole story for us: Although God loves everyone, He does not force His love on anyone. He shows us who He is and what He has done, and then it is up to us to respond to Him - to believe. If we don't believe, we do not become children of God, no matter how much God loves us. (*John 1:12*) (*John 3:36*)

Let's come to a conclusion, then. No one is physically born a child of God. No one automatically becomes a child of God at a certain age. No one is a child of God simply because they are loved by God. Only those who are loved by God and choose to believe in Jesus are children of God.

Now, what is John saying in this first verse of chapter 3? He's singing out the praises of God the Father – that He would be so kind as to pour out His love on us when we believe.

The amazing fact is - we get to believe and become children of God! At the time of our belief we are, in essence, adopted back into the family of God, from whence we (the whole human race) departed at the Garden of Eden.

Think about it – God had to be born as a baby, endure the scorn of the people He created, be killed by them on a cross, and then rise from the dead – just in order to purchase back the very people He loved and created in the first place.

We should join John in singing the praises of the One Who would do this.

2. (:1-3) What 3 things are true of children of God?
- a) We are children.
 - b) The world does not recognize us.
 - c) When Jesus returns, we have no idea of how much we will change and what we will be in the end.
3. (:4-9) What is a 4th thing which is true of children of God?
- d) We cannot habitually sin without feeling guilt.
4. (:10-15) What is a 5th thing which is true of children of God?
- e) We have an inborn desire to love other believers.
5. (:16-18) So....what does love look like?
- a) :16 Love is willing to die for another.
 - b) :17 Love has an urgency to share this world's goods with another in need.
 - c) :18 Love is not only talk. It is also action.
6. (:19-20) What gives us assurance that we are walking with God? Is there an outward sign that tells us we are doing this right? Answered prayer? Good things happening in our lives? Feeling happy?

If we have believed in Jesus and then find ourselves loving other believers in the way described above (a,b&c), that is a strong assurance that we are believers in Jesus. Answered prayer, good things happening to us, feelings of happiness....all those are great, but are not necessarily proof of a walk with God. But love for other believers is definite proof of life.

7. (:21-23) The word "confidence" means "bold outspokenness". Read this verse and insert that phrase "bold outspokenness". What does that mean? Does that change your prayers at all?

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What would it look like in your prayer life if you were “boldly outspoken” with God? If you know you are a believer in Jesus, in other words, a child of God, and if you see evidence of that in the fact that you love other believers in genuine ways, then how are you addressing your Father?

If He loves it when you are “boldly outspoken”, is there anything you should change about your prayers?

Is there anyone or anything you have prayed about for a long time? What would “boldly outspoken” look like for those prayers?

Do this little exercise: Just think it through. Go through your regular prayer list in your mind. Be boldly outspoken about each request. Keep it up. You will be encouraged.

“Oh God, Don’t let my (fill in the blank: church, city, family, country) stay just the way we are. Change us. Rattle our cages. Shake us up. If we won’t respond to You, get us out of the way”

8. (:24) I abide in Christ and He abides in me. Is Christ in me no matter what? Am I abiding in Christ no matter what? Can I remove myself from walking with Christ? Will He remove Himself from living in me? How can I know for sure He has not left me?
- I am in Christ because when I asked Jesus to be my Savior He wrapped me up into Himself. He will never let me go. (*John 10:28*).
 - And He also is in me – He came to live inside of me when I believed in Him. (*John 16:7*) (*John 17:23*)

Both of those things are true. Both of those things cannot change for all of eternity.

And one more thing can be added to this:

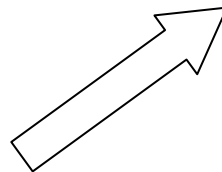
- I abide in Christ when I decide, moment-by-moment of my Christian life, to walk with Him. To listen to Him. To respond to Him. To grow in Him. To read my Bible. To pray. To love other believers. To obey what I see He is saying in His Word. To trust Him. To fellowship with other believers. To tell the Gospel to all I know. All those things are part of abiding in Him. I can decide not to abide in Him in this way....but how silly would that be?

Application Questions:

9. What does your walk with Christ look like?
10. Do you sometimes forget to talk to Jesus about everything?
11. Do you sometimes let sin go unconfessed for a long time?
12. Do you have past sins you need to confess?
13. Do you make efforts to love others? To do things for them?
14. Do you sometimes find yourself being harsh or losing your temper with other Christians? How can you change that?
15. What have you done this week to love another, not wanting anything back for yourself?
16. What basics did John focus on in this chapter?

The Basics Covered in Chapter 3:

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.
- 4. Love other Believers
- 5. Do Not Love the World
- 6. Look For His Return
- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

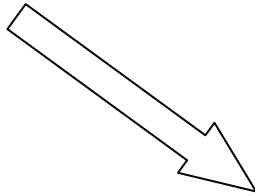


1st John Chapter 4 – Questions

1. (:1-3) How do we “test the spirits”, to know whether a teacher or leader is a false leader? (see also *2nd Peter 2* and *2nd John :7-10*) (*2nd Peter 2* will make your jaw drop at the intensity of feeling Peter has against false teachers)
2. (:4-6) What gives us great comfort as we come up against false teachers?
3. (:7-12) In your Bible, underline every time the word “love” or “loved” is mentioned in these verses. What is John trying to say? Do you think there’s a reason he is thinking about loving one another right on the heels of talking about false teachers?
4. (:13-16) Is it possible to “feel” the Spirit inside of you? (see also *Romans 5:1-5*)
5. (:17-19) Here’s that “bold outspokenness” phrase again. It is used here in combination with teaching that we should not be fearful because we are so loved. This time that bold outspokenness is referring to the time Jesus returns. Why will we need bold outspokenness then?
6. (:20-21) Again, John repeats that we must love one another as believers. Why do you think John is hammering on this again and again? Do you think we will need this teaching even more as we get closer and closer to end times? Why?

Application Questions:

7. What basics has John re-emphasized in this chapter?



8. How are you doing? Which of the basics are a regular part of your life?

The 7 Basics of An Amazing Christian Life:

- 1. Know the Gospel

- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day

- 3. Take Care of Sin Right Away.

- 4. Love other Believers

- 5. Do Not Love the World

- 6. Look For His Return

- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

1st John Chapter 4 – Answers

1. (:1-3) How do we “test the spirits”, to know whether a teacher or leader is a false leader? (see also *2nd Peter 2* and *2nd John :7-10*) (*2nd Peter 2* will make your jaw drop at the intensity of feeling Peter has against false teachers)

Bold warnings about false teachers are found throughout the New Testament, beginning with Jesus Himself while He was on earth. Peter, John, and Jude especially put false teachers on the same level with the lowest of the low. Why? Because truth sets people free to love God. Lies enslave them to the devil.

So, how to test the spirits? In other words – how do I know who is teaching the truth and who is teaching falsehood? We’ve discussed this before, but it bears lots of repeating - know the truth by reading and soaking up the Bible and walking day-by-day with Jesus, and then compare everything you hear to what you know to be true.

We have a responsibility as committed believers in Jesus to ask whether or not someone is teaching falsehood. That’s hard to do sometimes.

But there’s more required of us than just asking and studying and coming to conclusions. If we find that falsehood is being taught, we don’t have the option of being “polite”, saying nice things about the false teaching so we don’t appear intolerant, or just pretending we didn’t hear it. (look at *2nd John: 10&11*). If it’s truly false teaching we have to refuse to offer hospitality or polite words to those who promote the false teaching, and, in some cases we have to speak up, take a stand, and point it out – in love.

2. (:4-6) What gives us great comfort as we come up against false teachers?

We know the true Teacher, and He is right beside us. The false teachers have only the devil on their side, and we know the devil is the weak one, the one who is destined to lose in the end. The true Teacher not only will protect us, but He will also show us how to speak the truth in love.

3. (:7-12) In your Bible, underline every time the word “love” or “loved” is mentioned in these verses. What is John trying to say? Do you think there’s a reason he is thinking about loving one another right on the heels of talking about false teachers?

Yes, there’s a reason! The false teachers are people loved by God. Our confrontation with their falsehoods cannot be delivered as hatred. We can’t hate in order to combat untruth. We have to figure out how to love while we speak out against untruth and those who lead others astray.

Here’s why love has to be the underlying motive for our bold outspokenness:

- Love does not promote fear. Hate does.
- Love speaks the truth, and then takes the beating for it, not responding in hate.
- Love cannot be silent, for the truth is what people need to set them free.
- Love doesn’t give up. When the truth has been spoken, love sticks around to help.

4. (:13-16) Is it possible to “feel” the Spirit inside of you? (see also *Romans 5:1-5*)

The job of the Holy Spirit is to bring to our remembrance the story of Jesus and the truths of Jesus. So, yes, we can “feel” the Spirit within us pushing us, urging us to a hunger for the truth and an understanding of the truth. We can also “feel” the Spirit within us growing us, giving us peace, and pouring love into our beings.

Does that mean we will “feel” emotions? Will we cry a lot when the Spirit is dealing with us? Will we be overwhelmed with feelings? Not necessarily. The Spirit can be felt, all right, but we learn to “feel” Him in our spirit – that part of us that communicates with God. Our spirit can “feel” even when our emotions are not involved.

5. (:17-19) Here’s that “bold outspokenness” phrase again. This time that bold outspokenness is referring to the time Jesus returns. Why will we need bold outspokenness then?

In the end times we will need bold outspokenness not only in our prayer life (as John mentions in Chapter 3), but also in our relations with people. We will need to tell others what is really happening, interpret world events based on scripture. We will need to share the Gospel message in every situation imaginable.

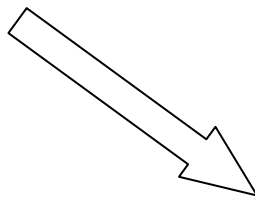
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6. (:20-21) Again, John repeats that we must love one another as believers. Why do you think John is hammering on this again and again? Do you think we will need this teaching even more as we get closer and closer to end times? Why?

If you do not have a reputation as a lover, it's time to get it. As the time for His return approaches, you will desperately need to be in the habit of loving more and more, because there will be growing reasons to hate. But God will be reaching out in love in the end times to those who have no hope. We will need to be on His same page.

Application Questions:

7. What basics has John re-emphasized in this chapter?



8. How are you doing? Do you need to work on love?

The Basics covered in Chapter 4:

- 1. Know the Gospel
- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day
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- 5. Do Not Love the World
- 6. Look For His Return
- 7. Be Confident - Because He will never lose you.

1st John Chapter 5 – Questions

1. (:1) What is the test for whether or not a person is born of God? And then, what always naturally follows when someone is born of God?
2. (:2) John is firming up our faith by stating this truth in 2 ways, just flipping the words:
 - a. We know we believe in Jesus because we _____
 - b. _____
We know we love believers because we _____
3. (:3) If we say we love Jesus, but we don't care if we do things His way, do we really love Jesus?
4. (:3) Is it really that big of a burden to do things His way?
5. (:4&5) What is the definition of an "overcomer"?
6. In Revelation, Chapters 2&3, Jesus writes short letters to each of 7 churches, and tells them what true "overcomers" will be able to accomplish, and what their rewards will be. Who is He referring to when He says "overcomers"? (look at *Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12, and 3:21.*)
7. (:6-8) In my opinion, this passage is one of the most difficult to figure out in the Bible. What do you think is meant by "water", and "blood", and "the Spirit"? (hint: It has to make sense in the middle of this passage.)

8. (:9-10) What are the witnesses (or proofs) God has given to mankind of who Jesus was and is? (*John 5:31-47* will help you answer this)
9. (:11&12) Just to be sure we are clear on this...If a person has not committed himself or herself to belief in Jesus Christ, does that person have eternal life?
10. (:13&14) If a person has committed herself or himself to belief in Jesus Christ, what can that person be sure of? (2 things)
11. (:14&15) This assurance, in verses 13&14, gives us confidence, or “bold outspokenness”. Do you have that?
12. (:16-17) What is this talking about?
13. (:18-21) John summarizes his letter in these verses. Why does he end with the statement, “*keep yourselves from idols*”? What does that have to do with the basics John has been teaching?

Application Questions:

14. Now that you have studied through all of 1st John, you know which basics you need to incorporate into your life, and maybe you can see which basics might be missing from the lives of your friends. If you had a friend come to you for help, someone struggling with being consistent with one of these basics, what suggestions would you give so that your friend could enjoy living this Amazing Christian Life?
 - 1. If someone is struggling with Knowing the Gospel, what would you recommend?
 - 2. If someone is struggling with Walking with Jesus every day, what would you recommend?

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- 3. If someone is struggling with Taking Care of Sin Right Away, what would you recommend?

- 4. If someone is struggling with Loving other Believers, what would you recommend?

- 5..If someone is struggling with Not Loving the World, what would you recommend?

- 6. If someone is struggling with Looking For His Return, what would you recommend?

- 7. If someone is struggling with Being Confident about Jesus' ability to get them to heaven, what would you recommend?

1st John Chapter 5 – Answers

Are the 7 Basics of An Amazing Christian Life a healthy, consistent part of your everyday life?

That means:

Do you spend time remembering and understanding your salvation?

Do you have the habit of talking to Jesus every day?

Do you have the habit of reading your Bible every day?

Do you have a group of friends who love the Lord and spend time talking about Him and His Word?

Are you sensitive to the voice of Jesus when He points out your sin?....or are you rebellious, not responding to the guilt Jesus lets you feel when you sin?

Do you take intentional steps to be involved in a church relationship with other believers of all ages and backgrounds?

Have you found yourself a “holy huddle”, and you are not wanting to move beyond it?

Are you eagerly thinking about and looking forward to Jesus’ return?

Do you feel confident in Jesus’ ability to get you to heaven?

The 7 Basics of An Amazing Christian Life:

- 1. Know the Gospel

- 2. Walk with Jesus Every Day

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- 4. Love other Believers

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1. (:1) What is the test for whether or not a person is born of God? And then, what always naturally follows when someone is born of God?

The test is: Do you wholeheartedly believe that Jesus is the Promised Messiah (in other words, the Christ), and that He is the one and only Son of God?

You see, if a person wholeheartedly believes the above, that person has come face-to-face with their own sinfulness and their lack of ability to save themselves. They have seen that they can only be saved by reaching out in faith to receive the gift of salvation from the One who is offering it to them, Jesus.

However, if anyone says they believe in Jesus, but do not believe He is the one and only Son of God, born as a baby with a physical body, living a sinless life, dying an undeserved death and rising from the dead....if they say they believe in Jesus but don't believe these things about Him...then they really don't believe in Jesus. They believe in some made-up version of Jesus.

True belief in the true Jesus is the test.

And once someone has truly believed in the true Jesus, what naturally, inevitably follows is love for other people who also have believed.

2. (:2) John is firming up our faith by stating this truth in 2 ways, just flipping the words:

- a. We know we believe in Jesus because we love believers.
- b. We know we love believers because we believe in Jesus.

3. (:3) If we say we love Jesus, but we don't care if we do things His way, do we really love Jesus?

No.

4. (:3) Is it really that big of a burden to do things His way?

No, it isn't. At first it seems like a huge burden to change our ways in order to line up with His ways. But once we begin doing it, wow!, it's fun! Doing things Jesus' way is equal to suddenly realizing who we were always meant to be. As we obey, we grow and we become a version of ourselves that is better than we ever could have imagined.

5. (:4&5) What is the definition of an “overcomer”?

An overcomer is someone who is born of God. And, remember, the definition of someone born of God (from 5:1) is someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ. An overcomer isn't perfect, but an overcomer always comes back to trying again to do it Gods way.

So...an overcomer is a believer. Every believer is an overcomer.

6. In Revelation, Chapters 2&3, Jesus writes short letters to each of 7 churches, and tells them what true “overcomers” will be able to accomplish, and what their rewards will be. Who is He referring to when He says “overcomers”? (look at *Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12, and 3:21.*)

“Overcomer” is not a level of Christianity – as if we must grow to the point where we can overcome. No, “overcomer” describes any and every Christian, no matter how young or old in the faith.

So why don't I always win that battle with sin if I am an overcomer? Why do I make big, glaring mistakes in my Christian life if I am an overcomer? Why have I lived so long as a Christian without even knowing some of these basic things about the Christian life if I am an overcomer?

Because you're not perfect. You have growing to do. You have sin to confess. You have good habits to accumulate in your life.

You are an overcomer. So quit feeling sorry for yourself and get going! You have things to overcome!

John would tell you to start by reading and understanding this letter, 1st John, and the 7 basics.

7. (:6-8) In my opinion, this passage is one of the most difficult to figure out in the Bible. What do you think is meant by “water”, and “blood”, and “the Spirit”? (hint: It has to make sense in the middle of this passage.)

Here's my opinion: I think John is saying there are three things which prove to us that Jesus was a real, flesh and blood man, and that He was at the same time God Himself.

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Here are the three things:

- Water – Jesus had a physical birth
- Blood – Jesus had a physical death
- Spirit – Jesus was totally indwelt by God the Holy Spirit His whole life, through His death on the cross, and through the Resurrection.

In other words, from the time of His birth, Jesus was totally man and totally God.

Why does this make sense in the context of this passage in 1st John 5?
Because in verse 5 John says that an overcomer is one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

And then in verses 6-8 John describes what that means – he describes who we actually believe in when we believe in Jesus. We are believing in the Total Man/Total God person named Jesus who lived on earth to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

And continuing on in verses 9-10, John states emphatically that God Himself has testified that Jesus was Total Man/Total God.

8. (:9-10) What are the witnesses (or proofs) God has given to mankind of who Jesus was and is? (*John 5:31-47* will help you answer this)

John 5:31-47 (also written by John, the author of this letter) gives a clear and simple picture of all the different proofs we have that Jesus is Total Man/Total God.

- *John 5:31* Jesus Himself makes this claim about Himself.
- *John 5:32-35* John the Baptist declared this to be true of Him.
- *John 5:36* The works which Jesus did on earth (the miracles) were proof of Who He was.
- *John 5:37-38* God the Father spoke from heaven more than once to confirm that Jesus was His Son – Total Man/Total God.
- *John 5:39* The scriptures of the Old Testament prophesied His coming in numerous places – all of which were fulfilled in Jesus, Total Man/Total God.
- *John 5:45-47* Moses, from Old Testament times, foretold that the perfect Total Man/Total God would come. Jesus declares emphatically that He is the One Moses was speaking of.

9. (:11&12) Just to be sure we are clear on this...if a person has not committed himself or herself to belief in Jesus Christ, does that person have eternal life?

Absolutely not.

10. (:13&14) If a person has committed herself or himself to belief in Jesus Christ, what can that person be sure of? (2 things)
- a) That person can be sure he has eternal life...and that eternal life starts at the moment of belief.
 - b) That person can be sure he will continue to believe.

11. (:14&15) This assurance, in verses 13&14, gives us confidence, or “bold outspokenness”. Do you have that?

Why does my assurance of my salvation make me a more confident person in prayer? Because I know I am firmly, always, in the family of God. I can come to my Father with boldness, knowing that I have much to learn, and that He lovingly wants to teach me...but He will never kick me out of His family. I'm there to stay. I can keep coming to Him in prayer my whole life and never fear losing my family. That kind of confidence makes us bold. Not arrogant. But bold.

12. (:16-17) What is this talking about?

The true Christian who chooses to continue to live in sin, no matter how guilty he feels and how miserable it makes him – what of this person? If he doesn't lose his salvation, then will God just continue to let him live being such a horrible witness for Christ?

I think this passage is teaching that there could come a time when a true believer must be called home. A true believer who rebelliously clings to sin sometimes is no longer allowed to go on living because the Lord cannot allow him to mess up His plan on earth. God still loves and has forgiven this person, but the damage being done by the person is too great to allow him to live. (Look at Acts 5, the story of Ananias and Sapphira, for a simple example of this)

John is telling his readers that although this does happen sometimes, it is always God's decision, and His alone, as to whether or not,, or even when, to call this rebellious believer home. John tells his readers not to pray for death for

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someone they think is sinning to the max. Only God knows when there are no more chances.

13. (:18-21) John summarizes his letter in these verses. Why does he end with the statement, “*keep yourselves from idols*”? What does that have to do with the basics John has been teaching?

In my opinion, this “keep yourself from idols” phrase is the perfect ending to this letter cementing the basics of the Christian life. Why? Because anything you love more than Jesus is your idol. If you love something more than Jesus, you won’t want to revolve your whole life around Jesus, you’ll want to revolve your whole life around your idol.

So....do you have a inner desire to walk with Jesus and be who He wants you to be? Follow the advice in this letter.

Do you not really care about this that much? You have idols in your life.

Application Questions:

14. Now that you have studied through all of 1st John, you know which basics you need to incorporate into your life, and maybe you can see which basics might be missing from the lives of your friends. If you had a friend come to you for help, someone struggling with being consistent with one of these basics, what suggestions would you give so that your friend could enjoy living this Amazing Christian Life?
- 1. If someone is struggling with Knowing the Gospel, what would you recommend?

Read the Gospels again and again. Read *Romans*. Read *I Corinthians 15*.

- 2. If someone is struggling with Walking with Jesus every day, what would you recommend?

First, pray. Ask Jesus to give you a desire to have a daily time with Him. And then do a little work on it: Make it your top priority to find the time of day which works best with your personality, your schedule. Find a good Bible Study to go through on your own. Or memorize a little scripture every day. Make out a prayer list of your own, and use it as you pray every day.

- 3. If someone is struggling with Taking Care of Sin Right Away, what would you recommend?

Pray. Ask Jesus to give you a clear picture of what you need to confess. Ask Him to make you miserable until you do it. (Read *Psalms 139, Psalm 51*)

- 4. If someone is struggling with Loving other Believers, what would you recommend?

Don't wait to feel love. Love is doing. Do practical, loving things for other people in your church, not expecting anything in return. Do comes first, feel comes second.

If you are not involved in a local church, find one. Look for a church which preaches and teaches the Bible. Check out their doctrinal statement – you don't want to get involved in something which teaches untruth. Ask friends for suggestions.

If all else fails, and there simply isn't a good church in your area, then you have 2 choices:

1. Drive as far as you have to, to get to a good church.
2. Start one.

You don't have the choice of not going to church. If you are the only Christian in your whole community, and you can't drive anywhere farther to find other Christians, then do church on your own! (Look what the Apostle John did when he found himself on a prisoner island with no one but himself to do church with: He did church alone. (*Revelation 1:10*))

- 5..If someone is struggling with Not Loving the World, what would you recommend?

Start cutting yourself off from the idols you have embraced. Ask the Lord to show you what they are.

- 6. If someone is struggling with Looking For His Return, what would you recommend?

Read *1st and 2nd Thessalonians*. Read *Revelation*. Read *1st and 2nd Peter*. Read *John chapter 14*. Read through the Gospels over and over – and ask

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Jesus to increase your longing to see Him again soon.

- 7. If someone is struggling with Being Confident about Jesus' ability to get them to heaven, what would you recommend?

Let the scriptures convince you. Nobody can convince themselves of such an insane truth – that God loves you so much He sent His own Son to die in your place, and then raised Him up from the dead...and then, once you believe you are forever forgiven for all the sins you ever did do, and all the sins you ever will do.

Read *1st John* again. Go slowly. Ask the Lord – the Holy Spirit - to convince you.

He will. That's His job.

Need a suggestion for your next Bible Study?
How about 1st Thessalonians?

Let's assume you have gotten the 7 Basics of 1st John solidly a part of your life now.

And maybe since the time you believed in Jesus you really haven't paid all that much attention to the fact that He is returning.

Maybe it's time to soak it all in, ask a bunch of questions, and start looking forward to this awesome event.

[1st Thessalonians](#) is such a great place to start this!

Paul writes these two letters to some people he dearly loves in the city of Thessalonica. Paul started the church there, then had to flee because of persecution. When he writes his first letter to them, and his second, you can just feel the great love he has for them. He is truly a Pastor to them in every sense of the word.

And because of that Pastoral love, Paul spends much time in these letters telling the Thessalonians the Lord is returning! Not to scare them, but to encourage them, to comfort them.

[1st Thessalonians](#) will warm your heart and stir it up with a great longing to see the face of Jesus soon!

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