

Study Guide



1 John

Introduction

August 21, 2016

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

This week we'll introduce the 1st Epistle of John. Epistle simply means letter. When examining a letter, there are a few important questions to ask.

1. Who wrote it?
2. To whom did the author write?
3. What was the occasion of the letter?
4. What was the author trying to convey?

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

August—Be Intentional
October 12-22—South Sudan
December 18-28—South Sudan

Calendar

August 21—Members' Meeting
August 22—Community Groups Start
September 18th—Connection Group Starts

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to “Doxology” (one of the songs Granger will lead us in this week):

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Let earth and heavenly saints proclaim
The power and might of His great Name
Let us exalt on bended knee
Praise God, the Holy Trinity

Chorus

Praise God, praise God, praise God, Who saved my soul
Praise God, praise God, praise God from Whom all blessings flow

Praise to the King, His throne transcends
His crown and Kingdom never end
Now and throughout eternity
I'll praise the One Who died for me

Word (45 Minutes)

I. Authorship

Authorship in 1 John is not cut and dried. Unlike many letters of the New Testament, there is no claim to authorship within the letter itself. The same is true for 2nd and 3rd John, though the author in the 2nd and 3rd epistles refers to himself as “the elder” (Marshall, 42). Style and common language have led many commentators to conclude that the author of the three epistles is the same as the author of the Gospel of John.

What we do see internally in the letter of 1st John is that the author observed Jesus (John 1:1-4). This is called apostolic authority and it is one of 3 criteria that were used when evaluating what should be included in the canon. The other 2 criteria were consistency, meaning that it didn't contradict the teachings of accepted Scripture, and acceptance, meaning that the writing was regarded by the early church as authoritative.

II. Audience

Some letters were viewed as catholic (meaning universal) while others were clearly to a specific church. While we don't know what church the author has written to, we do see evidence that the author was addressing specific issues of the Church of a specific region.

III. Occasion

Have you ever listened to someone's phone conversation and pieced together what the person on the other end was saying? We can do the same thing with the letters like 1 John. This is often called "shadow reading". When you shadow read 1 John, you can see that there was a particular issue in this church.

Marshall writes, "A crisis had arisen in the church due to the rise of teachers who were advocating a understanding of Christianity different from that upheld by John and his colleagues. The point had been reached where they had actually left the church, presumably to set up their own rival institution . . ." (Marshall, 14). We'll see, as we consider the themes, what correctives were needed for the church to whom the author is writing.

IV. Themes

1st John is known for its Christology. Christology is the study of the person and work of Christ. Naturally, this leads us to conclude that the person and work of Christ were the focus of the false teachers that the author is addressing.

Common heresies in that time dealt with whether or not Jesus was fully divine and fully human. If he wasn't fully divine, it couldn't be argued that he was the son of God. If he wasn't fully human, it couldn't be argued that he was the substitute for mankind.

Additionally, we see that those with improper doctrine have lives that do not reflect holiness and righteousness. The author addresses this directly in 2:3-6:

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

As always, improper doctrine leads to improper practice. The author is writing to correct this.

V. Summary

The author is writing to make sure the readers understand who Christ is and what he has done. Additionally, they need to know that a right view of Christ will result in ever increasing love and righteousness for those who claim to be followers of Christ.

May the Lord use this book to help us understand what a treasure we have in the person and work of Christ as he helps us to order our lives according Christ's marvelous work.

Sermon Questions

1. Introduction: Tracy will give an overview of the whole book of 1 John this Sunday. Because of that, the format of the study questions is different for this week. We will look at some purposes and main themes of the whole book of 1 John.
2. The word “know” is used 32 times in this short book of 1 John. Some examples are 1 John 5:13, 1 John 2:5-6, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:13. What is John aiming for his readers to know in this book? What does he want them to be assured about?
3. There were some people in this church that had stopped believing in the apostolic message about Jesus’s life, death, resurrection, and salvation that flowed from that. These people had already left the church. Read 1 John 2:18-25 for a description of them. What can we infer about these people and their beliefs? Also look at 1 John 4:2-3.
4. These people who had left the church also had some faulty beliefs and practices regarding sin. Read 1 John 1:8-10, 1 John 3:4-6, and 1 John 3:8-9. What can we infer from these verses about the false beliefs and actions of these people who have left their fellowship?
5. According to 1 John 4:7-12 and other passages in 1 John, there were also another problem in their relationships with people. What was it?
6. Based on the passages that you read in questions 2-5 what are three signs in a Christian’s life that can bring assurance of being an authentic Christian?

NOTES:

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying times of fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important.

Many groups have found that it is helpful to break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I would encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you in your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

1. Number 1 is a statement; not a question
2. John wants his readers to know, to be assured, that they are authentic Christians and have eternal life.
3. These people had already left the church. John describes them as anti-Christ. They denied that Jesus was the Christ.
4. In 1 John 1:8-10 it implies that these people claimed they had no sin—sinless perfection. However, in 1 John 3:4-6 and 1 John 3:6-8 it appears that they were freely violating God's Law; they were making a practice of sinning. They were not careful to practice righteousness.
5. 1 John 4:7-12 infers that they did not love one another. John said that "anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."
6. Three signs that should bring assurance of authentic Christianity to believers are:
 - a. Having a firm faith that Jesus is the Son of God and that we have eternal life in him.
 - b. Living a holy life of practicing righteousness, but at the same time admitting sin, confessing it before God and seeking forgiveness.
 - c. Practicing love toward others just as Jesus loved us.