

The First Letter
of
John

Living a Life of Love

INTRODUCTION

This is a self-help study of the 1st Letter of John. It is a short letter to help us to be certain about who Jesus is and also to be certain that we have eternal life by believing in him. He tells us that true faith expresses itself in practical deeds of love for others. John also writes to warn us about false teachers who are enemies of Christ.

The Bible is divided into books, chapters and verses. This makes it easy to locate any particular passage. In this study you will find the reference (chapter and verse) to the left of the question, as in the following example:

1:1-2 Who is the Word of life that John is writing about here?

The Bible

Jesus Christ

The answer to this question is found in 1st John , chapter 1, verses 1 and 2.

Quotations are taken from the New International “Free on the Inside” Version of the Bible. It will be easier to do the study by using this version, although other versions can also be used. The wording may vary but the meaning will be the same.

After reading the passage, answer the question by making a mark beside the correct phrase. If you are uncertain of an answer, mark the one that you think is correct and make a question mark next to it. The person who corrects your study will be able to answer your question or will look for the answer if he or she does not know it.

John wrote this letter so that we might know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13). When we read it, we discover that to know that we have eternal life is more than just saying a prayer that we are sorry for sin and accept Jesus into our heart. If we are sincere, we will live like Jesus lived (2:6) and will do that by loving others in a self-giving way. I trust that as you read this letter from John you will have the certainty that you have eternal life. Even though we are not perfect in this world (1:8-10), I trust that the evidence of the life of Jesus in you becomes more and more evident with each passing year.

Rev. Charles Uken, 2010.

FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

1:1-2 Who is the Word of life that John is writing about here?

- The Bible
- Jesus Christ

1:3-4 John writes so that we his readers can share in eternal life and have fellowship with him and also with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. He does this so that we

- Will think we are better than other people.
- Will be filled with joy along with him.

1:5 Can God be blamed for doing what is wrong?

- Yes
- No

1:6-10 What does light do?

- It hides defects.
- It exposes defects

1:6-10 What does it mean to walk in the light?

- To claim that we have no sin.
- To admit that we have sinned, ask God for forgiveness and ask him to make us pure.

2:1-2 John writes so that we will not sin. But if we do sin, what help does God provide?

- He provides us with Jesus who is like a good defense lawyer who speaks on our behalf.
- He provides the payment of our sin by sending Jesus to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin and also for the sin of the whole world.
- He shows us how to get advice from the spirit of a dead relative who can give us good advice.

(2 correct answers)

2:3-6 We know that we belong to God?

If we stop sinning and obey what he commands.

If we live like Jesus lived, obeying his heavenly Father and loving others.

If we pray to receive forgiveness and then keep on sinning.

(2 correct answers)

2: 7-8 The new command is to love others as Jesus loved us (see John 13:34). This is at the same time an old command.

This is true because:

Sacrificial love has always been at the heart of who God is but was revealed most clearly in the life and death of Jesus.

It agrees with strict justice where we are to pay back to others how they have treated us.

2:9-11 What makes people blind so that they don't know where they are going? So that they don't know how to live or even truly know God?

They don't know all the doctrines of the church.

They don't love their Christian brothers and sisters.

2:12-14 Only old people can be true believers?

True False

2:12-14 Children are those who are:

Younger than 7 years old.

Those who have faith like a child, who believe and trust in Jesus (Matthew 18:3-4).

2:12-14 Young people have a difficult time because they cannot win the battle over their passions and desires. Once they

get older and settle down, they can become Christians.

True False

2:15-17 What do worldly people do?

- They try to satisfy their sinful desires.
- They brag about all the good things that they do.
- They humble themselves and obey what God desires even when no one is looking.

2:17 What will eventually pass away?

- Those who do what God desires.
- The world and those who live for this life.

2:18-19 How do we know that we live in the last days before the return of Christ from heaven?

- There are enemies of Christ who have dropped out of the church and then opposed it.
- The world is getting better and better and technology is bringing people together and helping them love each other more and more.

2:20-27 If we have received the Holy Spirit by believing in Jesus, it means that:

- We know so much that we don't have to go to church and listen to sermons or take part in small group Bible studies.
- We know in our heart that Jesus came from God and that he is our Lord and Master. No one has to tell us that we must obey him, because we want to.

2:28-29 Do we have to be afraid of the Judgment Day when Jesus returns if we continue to believe in Jesus and do what is right?

- Yes
- No

3:1-3 What is the measure of God's love?

- Even though we have a sinful nature, God accepts us as children into his family when we believe in Jesus.
- After accepting Jesus, we become more prosperous and and enjoy better health.

3:1-3 When Jesus appears (when Jesus returns from heaven) we

will be like him with moral purity and a new, resurrected body. How do we prepare for that day?

_____ By joining a fitness club and keeping in shape.

_____ By becoming more and more pure. We do this by confessing our sins (1:9), trusting in Jesus who paid for sins (2:2) and loving like Jesus loved (2:6).

3:4-9 Does a believer keep on sinning?

_____ Yes _____ No

3:4-9 If we keep on sinning, it shows that

_____ We belong to the devil, who is sinful and lawless.

_____ We belong to Jesus, but don't have the gift of being able to control ourselves.

3:8 Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil.

_____ If we believe and trust in Jesus, Jesus will help us destroy the work of the devil in our lives.

_____ If we keep on sinning and keep on following the devil, Jesus will destroy us along with the devil.

_____ If we have been tempted and fall into sin, we can never again change our mind, turn from sin and trust in Jesus.

(2 correct answers)

3:9-10 How do we know if we are born again?

_____ We can take an inventory of our lives and note the progress we make in our fight against sin.

_____ We love other Christian brothers and sisters in the fellowship of the church.

_____ We leave the church fellowship when we notice that someone has done something wrong. They are hypocrites and we don't to be with hypocrites.

(2 correct answers)

3:11-12 The story of Cain who killed his brother Abel is recorded in Genesis 4:1-16. The command to love one another is “from the beginning.” This means:

From the beginning of recorded history.

From the beginning of Jesus’ ministry.

From the beginning of our instruction in the Christian faith.

At the beginning of the Apostles’ Creed.

(3 correct answers)

3:13-15 How do people act in their old sinful condition?

They love each other and forgive each other when they do wrong.

They have a good sense of fairness and justice and get even when others do wrong.

3:13-15 What is at the heart of murder?

Respect

Revenge

Hate

3:16-19 We know that love expresses itself in deeds and not just talk because:

Jesus gave his life for us.

God commands us to help those in need in practical ways.

That is what we do if it’s convenient for us.

Feeling compassion for someone makes us want to do something to help.

(3 correct answers)

3:18-24 If we love one another and we show that love by deeds of kindness:

We will be afraid of the Judgment Day because nothing we do is ever good enough to meet God’s standard of perfection.

We are not afraid of the Judgment because we know that God is watching and that this pleases him.

We know that faith in Jesus Christ and loving others go together.

(2 correct answers)

3:18-24 How do we know that the Holy Spirit is living in us?

- We speak with tongues like the Apostles spoke on the day of Pentecost.
- We love like Jesus loved us.

4:1-6 How can we know a true teacher from a false one?

- True teachers follow the teaching of the Apostles.
- True teachers say that Jesus is not God. He is purely a good human being.
- True teachers say that God is so pure and holy that he cannot appear in human form.
- True teachers believe and teach that God became truly human in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(2 correct answers)

4:1-6 The Bible teaches that God is One and that at the same time God is Three. This doctrine is called the Trinity. We know this because:

- God did not stop being God when he became man. Jesus prayed to God and called him “Father.”
- Jesus was not merely human. At his baptism and on Mountain of Transfiguration a voice from heaven said, “ This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him” (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 17:5).
- The Trinity is a concept that is easy to understand and accept.

(2 correct answers)

4:6-12 God is invisible and no one has ever seen him. We know God because:

- Philosophers reason that the universe must have a Creator.
- We have come to know Jesus and he showed us what God’s love is like by dying for us and giving us eternal life.
- We begin to love others and forgive them because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

(2 correct answers)

4:13-21 John has been talking about love. **Read**

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 for a description of love as the Apostle Paul describes it. Paul also contrasts the life lived in accord with the Spirit and the life that is controlled by fleshly desire. **Read Galatians 5:16-26.**

When we love others, it means that:

___ We are joined to God.

___ We do not have to be afraid of God's judgment.

___ We don't have to wait for marriage to have sex. We say, "We love each other, so why wait?"

___ God first loved us, forgave us, and put his Spirit in our hearts so that we can love like he loves us.

(3 correct answers)

5:1-5 Those who love God also love his _____.

5:1-5 How do we overcome the temptation that comes from the world?

___ Our human nature naturally likes to obey God's commands and love other people. So we do what easy and what we like to do.

___ Faith in Jesus has given us a new nature so that we desire to obey God's commands and love others.

___ Faith in Jesus wins the battle over our sinful desires.

(2 correct answers)

5:6-12 The Holy Spirit gave a true witness about Jesus

___ When he appeared in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism (John 1:33-34 and Luke 3:22).

___ When the Spirit inspired the prophets to write about Jesus' death and resurrection. See Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

___ When Hollywood produces a movie about Jesus.

(2 correct answers)

5:10-12 Those who accept the witness of the Bible and the Holy Spirit:

___ Are liars

___ Have eternal life

5:13 John wrote this letter so that we would be filled with fear and be uncertain about our salvation.

True False

5:14-15 When we pray, what does God give us?

Everything that we ask for.

Everything that agrees with his will, that fits in with his plan to bring us to heaven and that also agrees with loving one another.

THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN **(Note on 1 John 5:16-21)**

There are three types of sin that cannot be forgiven.

1. Read Matthew 12:22-32. This is where the religious leaders said that what Jesus did was the work of the devil. Their conscience was so hardened that they were unable to recognize the work of God. They knew that what Jesus did was from God, but they were so stubborn and proud that they would not believe.

The Apostle Paul was a Pharisee and in his youth did not believe in Jesus. Later he wrote that he did this out of ignorance and unbelief. When Christ revealed himself to him on the road to Damascus, Paul recognized

and accepted Jesus for who he was. He believe and was saved. (1 Timothy 1:13-14). Before his conversion he sincerely wanted to please God, but did it in a wrong way.

2. The second type of sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin of apostasy, knowing Jesus and then falling away for good. This is a denial and turning back on the faith (See Hebrews 6:4-6 and Hebrews 10:26-27). This is not just a temporary fall, like when someone gets mad at the leadership in the church, leaves and then later returns. It is a turning away from the church and it is turning away from the truth of the gospel. It's like saying, "All this religion stuff is phony and I'm never going back." It's useless to try to win these people back again.

3. A third type of sin that God does not forgive is the sin of not forgiving others. (See Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:21-35).

Have you been guilty of a sin that cannot be forgiven? If you are convicted of your sin and want to follow Christ, you are not guilty of the unpardonable sin. If, however, you continually resist the prompting of the good news of salvation, then be careful. Do not resist and be stubborn.

Should you should pray for those who are lost and living in the way of sin. Yes. Even while on the cross Jesus prayed for those who were mocking and crucifying him, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." However, if they continually refuse to listen and to turn from sin, there comes a time when you need to stop praying for that person. The prophet Samuel "mourned" (was filled with sorrow) for King Saul (1 Samuel 15:35). Then God told Samuel to stop being filled with sorrow for Saul and go and anoint David as the new king over Israel (1 Samuel 16:1).

Let's make this very practical. We know that some miracle-working preachers are false. They are good magicians. The tragedy is that some people reject the gospel because of this. However, the fact is that sincere people in the church pray, and over and over again, people are healed and problems are solved. Weeds in a field of good wheat do not make the wheat bad.

Sometimes people leave the church because they have been hurt by the sin of a leader. They say, "If the church is like that, I'm not going any more." The problem here is an unforgiving spirit. A sincere believer will work through the problem using the principles of Matthew 18:15-35. God wants us to call sinners to repent and be forgiven, just like he calls us to turn from sin and trust in Jesus.

Examining these various types of sin, my conclusion is that the only sin that cannot be forgiven is a stubborn refusal to recognize one's own faults, to turn from them and accept Jesus Christ and to submit to him. We need to be very careful. Let us not blame God for wrongdoing and let us not abandon faith in Jesus. Really, the only sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin of unbelief. Today, if you hear God's voice, do not harden your hearts (Hebrews 3:7-8). Stop doubting, start believing.