



BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Book Of
1 JOHN

Modern Narrative Project

A Contemporary Rendering, Context,

Meaning & Commentary

Based on the King James Version

ROOT-TO-FRUIT

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BIBLE:ESSENCE

Bible Study Project

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This publication is intended for educational, devotional, and study purposes. Readers are encouraged to consult additional biblical translations and scholarly resources when conducting biblical research and study.

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DEDICATED TO GOD AND MY SON
... MY SON, MAY YOUR HEART FIND THE LORD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GEMMA, for opening the door so I could see.

PASTOR PHIL, for acknowledging and encouraging me to believe big and be fearless - giving clarity to the path I was seeing.

PREFACE

First, thanks for picking up this book. If there is anything good in these pages, give credit to God; anything weak or flawed, that's on me. I wrote this out of gratitude—a small way to give back, hoping maybe it lights the path for someone else, just like Scripture has done for me:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

My journey to faith wasn't in a moment of crisis, in despair, or some dramatic story. No lightning bolts, no instant conversion. Honestly, it was more like water slowly carving its path over time.

Back at University, nearly 40 years ago, my friends were genuinely fired up about their faith and invited me along. They, and their invitation for me to believe there is a God, are the reason I got baptised. It wasn't about church pressure; I just knew I wanted what they had, even if I didn't truly understand what it was. But one thing was becoming clear to me: I was experiencing something I came to understand as the work of the Holy Spirit.

After University, the real world arrived. For years, my faith stayed quiet and private. I said the Lord's Prayer every day. I tried to live with an open hand and hoped God had a plan for me, especially when life made no sense. I tried never to judge others too quickly, because I could never know the whole story or what was in another person's heart. God alone sees all things and judges perfectly.

Still, I rarely set foot in church. My life was busy, and I worked most Sundays. I also hardly knew anyone who talked about their faith openly.

I tried reading the Bible, but wrestling with the King James Version just felt impossible. When I was baptised, there wasn't the choice of Bibles we have today. Sure, I believed there was something bright and life-giving in its words. I wasn't rejecting the King James Bible. I simply couldn't understand much of its language.

Then, a couple of years ago, everything shifted.

I lost my job in a way that wasn't fair. My father passed away—not long after celebrating sixty years with my mother. My son was also close to a breakdown—he had been working too hard. Soon after that, I moved into my mother's home so that I could care for her.

I believe Scripture calls us to care for our own (1 Timothy 5:8), and there are times when that responsibility has to come before my ability to attend church. Leaving my mother to attend church is not always safe, and that has made regular attendance difficult.

This has never been a rejection of the Church or of Christian fellowship. Quite the opposite. My heart is entirely with God, and I genuinely believe that caring for my mother is where God wants me to be. She is slowly losing her hearing and vision, with Alzheimer's taking away more of who she is each day.

It is a hard season, and it continues to be. But I don't resent where I am. With all my heart, I believe this is where I am meant to be, and where I want to be.

The quick succession, timing and intensity of these events in my life began to feel like part of God's plan for me.

It was then that I found solace in the Bible, just as life felt cracked wide open. And yet, in that brokenness, I noticed what I'd missed before—God actually draws close to people whose hearts are shattered (Psalm 34:18). When I ran out of my own strength, I learned how much I could lean on His:

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Bible became more than something I was trying to understand. It became something I needed, even a passion. I honestly cannot imagine where I would be now without it.

Caring for my mother meant I couldn't run from thing to thing anymore, and I like to be busy. It also meant that I didn't have as much time or access to friends, especially as I now lived in a new area. Life slowed down, and income dropped to just enough to cover bare necessities.

But in that quiet, a new door opened.

I started volunteering as a driver—just helping elderly and vulnerable people who simply needed a lift—and, in many cases, a lift in more ways than one. I also started sharing my faith. It's a small thing, but it felt right—my passengers lifted me as much as I lifted them, and I felt comfortable sharing my faith.

James reminds us that caring for those in need is an important expression of faith (James 1:27).

That volunteering drew me back to church, and—probably for the first time ever—I found myself having real conversations with God. Not just polite, thank-you prayers that I had always done, but honest ones where I was asking for help. I no longer felt guilty about asking God for help, as though doing so somehow meant I didn't trust the path God had given me.

I was forming a relationship with God.

And something shifted. I started to realise that God doesn't just help; He guides us, and I was beginning to learn to listen (Proverbs 3:5–6). I also started seeing the Bible not simply as a set of instructions, but as a guide for how to live.

I also began to see something about Christian fellowship that I hadn't really considered before.

Human beings naturally form communities. We make friends, find people we are comfortable with, and over time those friendships become established. There is nothing wrong with that. But Scripture calls us to something beyond simply gathering with the people we already know.

My own circumstances have sometimes left me on the edge of those established friendships. Even when I am able to attend church or volunteer, I often have responsibilities waiting for me at home. Sometimes I have to leave as soon as I can. At other times, I stay longer than I should because there is work that needs doing before I can return home.

I don't want that to be mistaken for being unfriendly or uninterested. Quite the opposite. I want fellowship. I want friendship. I want to feel that I belong.

This experience has taught me to be cautious about judging what I see in another person. I may see someone who does not stay, does not talk much, or seems distant, but I cannot know the circumstances behind what I see. God sees the whole story; I see only a small part of it.

That does not mean we should never exercise discernment. There are times when we need to recognise what is right and wrong, protect ourselves or others, and act when something is clearly harmful. But I believe we should be very slow to turn an observation into an assumption, an assumption into a judgement, and a judgement into exclusion. This has become clearer, while studying the Bible.

There may be someone standing on the edge of a church who desperately wants to belong. There may be someone carrying a burden that nobody else knows about. There may be someone searching for God who is quietly watching how Christians treat one another.

And that matters.

There are already enough barriers between people and God without Christians unintentionally creating more.

Jesus gives us a powerful picture of this in the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine sheep, but when one goes astray, he goes looking for it. The ninety-nine are not unimportant. But neither is the one.

That image has stayed with me.

If someone is struggling to understand Scripture, perhaps we should not simply assume that they will eventually find their way. If someone is standing on the edge of a Christian community, perhaps we should not simply accept that they are outside it. If someone appears distant, perhaps we should remember that we do not know their whole story.

Sometimes all that is needed is for someone to notice them, make room for them, and make sure they are not quietly left on the outside.

I don't say any of this as a criticism of the Church, and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers. I say it because Scripture has made me increasingly aware that following Christ changes not only our relationship with God, but also the way we see and treat other people.

Perhaps that is one of the things God has been teaching me through this season:

I cannot know another person's whole story, but I can choose not to become another barrier in their way.

So, I decided to really read the Bible, cover to cover.

My memory has always been atrocious, so I started typing out every verse, hoping the hands-on effort would help me absorb the words more effectively. Next to each King James verse, I wrote out what I thought it meant in plain English and started researching to gain more clarity.

Partly, I did it because I'd missed years of church teaching, and because I had put down the Bible in the past because of the frustration of not understanding more clearly the words that I read. But mostly, I did it for my son—he's autistic, he's exhausted, and as his father, I wanted to understand Scripture well enough to explain it to him. So, I decided to tackle my frustration with the Bible head-on.

Breaking it down for him became my main reason for all this—a way to do what Deuteronomy 6:6–7 calls us to:

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...”

After I finished the first chunk, I showed it to my pastor because I wanted to be sure I hadn't missed the mark. He encouraged me greatly and told me to keep going.

So, I did.

Book by book, it grew, and I kept one thing front and centre:

“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

“Let me be clear about what this is, and what it's not.”

This is not a rewrite of the Bible, or any sort of replacement for it. Scripture is the foundation:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

I haven't altered the Scripture itself. Every King James verse is there in full, so you can clearly see what is Scripture and what is my attempt to explain it. What I have written alongside it is simply plain-English meaning and explanation—for people who are new to the Bible, even the young, to help them move towards understanding what is being said.

“Call it a companion, not a substitute. I call it Bible:Essence Project as it is simply that, the essence of the Bible.”

That line matters to me. I’ve tried to make the language simpler, not shrink the meaning. Where a verse is difficult to put into plain English, or where faithful Christians have understood it in more than one way, I try to say so rather than pretend there is only one possible interpretation.

This isn’t a new idea. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Levites read God's law and then explained it so everyone could understand. When Philip came across the Ethiopian man in Acts 8, that man admitted he couldn't understand Scripture without help. And Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

“Unless you speak words that are easy to understand, how will anyone know what you’re saying?” (1 Corinthians 14:9).

Helping people understand Scripture has always been part of the life of God's people. I'm simply trying, in a very small way, to do the same.

There are many Bible studies and guides written by people who have a passion for God and a desire to share what they have learned. I make no claim to be different in that respect. I am simply another person who has found something in Scripture that I want others to have the opportunity to discover.

I didn’t write this as a scholar, and I don’t expect you to read it as though you’re taking a course. I’m simply an ordinary person whose faith deepened later in life, who still gets stuck on difficult passages, and who wanted to find a way into Scripture—for myself, for my son, and perhaps for you too.

Perhaps coming to a deeper understanding later in life has given me a perspective that can help someone else who is only just beginning that journey.

I’m not claiming to have all the answers, and I certainly don’t want you to take my explanations as a substitute for Scripture. Please check what I’ve written against the Scripture alongside it, and where something is difficult or open to more than one interpretation, I will try to say so.

My hope is not that you take my word for anything, but that my efforts might help you engage with God's Word for yourself.

If you already know the Bible well, I hope you'll forgive the simplicity of some of the explanations. They aren't written because I think Scripture is simple, but because I remember what it felt like when it wasn't.

And if you find that I've misunderstood something, I hope you'll test my words against Scripture, as I have tried to do myself.

I’m not looking for money or recognition. Most of these last few years, I’ve been caring for my mother and using whatever spare time I could find to chip away at this project. In a strange way, the two have gone hand in hand.

My prayer is that these efforts, offered to God, will do the quiet work in your heart that His Word began in mine.

I’m trusting, as Isaiah says, that God's word never returns empty—it always does what He intends (Isaiah 55:11).

Honestly, my hope is simple:

“That these pages help you move from feeling stuck with the text to beginning to understand it—and that, somewhere along that journey, you encounter God, as I did.

I hope you come to feel the love of the Bible as I do, and feel blessed by the wisdom of God’s Word as it shines through its pages.

I am continually in awe of the Bible. Although it was written more than 2,000 years ago, the wisdom it contains is just as relevant today as it has ever been—and, perhaps more than ever, that wisdom is needed now in our world.”

And if that happens for even one person, then all the time and effort that went into these pages will have been worth it.

Don’t worry if you struggle like me to remember Bible verses. Be assured that as you read, the verses will enter your heart, soul — and even your bones!

May God bless you, and may His Word do in your heart what it has done in mine. **Amen.**

Methodology Declaration:

The research for this Bible Study was conducted using a variety of sources, including Bible study plans available through YouVersion, other Bible study books, websites, and AI tools.

AI was used as a research and reference tool, rather than as a means of generating the Bible Study itself. Where AI was used, I used a platform that allowed me to submit the same prompts to multiple AI models and compare their responses. I then analysed and cross-referenced the information provided, with the aim of identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or potential AI “hallucinations.”

The research from these various sources, including the AI-assisted research, helped me to develop my understanding of the subjects discussed and influenced some of my thinking. However, the content and wording presented in this Bible Study were written by me, based on my own understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the research.

If you’ve enjoyed what this Bible study has revealed to you, why not visit my website, where you’ll find many more resources that reveal the wonder and awe of the Bible? www.root-to-fruit.faith

Book Summary: 1 John

The book of 1 John serves as a heartfelt letter from an elderly apostle to early Christian communities, aiming to confirm their faith and guide them amidst confusing teachings. It emphasises the foundational truths of Christianity: Jesus Christ was a real person, truly God and truly man. The letter encourages believers to live lives marked by love for God and for one another, as this is a true indicator of their relationship with God. It also provides clear guidance on how to identify false teachers and how to be assured of their eternal life through Jesus, focusing on themes like obedience, love, and the presence of God's Spirit within them.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter Summary: 1 John 1

Chapter 1 begins by affirming the apostles' firsthand experience with Jesus, the "Word of life," emphasising that they heard, saw, and even touched Him. This direct testimony is shared so that readers can join in the same profound connection with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, leading to complete joy. The chapter then introduces a core truth: God is pure light, completely devoid of darkness. It explains that a genuine relationship with God means living openly and honestly, in His light, rather than pretending while living in sin. The chapter concludes by stressing that everyone sins, but God is faithful to forgive and cleanse those who admit their wrongs through the sacrifice of Jesus.

1:1 (KJV) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;
(B:E Project) John opens by saying: we're writing about someone who existed from the very start of everything - and we didn't just hear about him second-hand, we heard him ourselves, saw him with our own eyes, even touched him with our hands. This is about a real, physical person: the "Word of life".

Context: This is the opening line of the letter (grammatically not complete until verse 3) - John establishing his eyewitness credentials before he says anything else.

Meaning: John is making a deliberate claim: this isn't hearsay or a nice philosophy, it's testimony from someone who was physically present with Jesus. He's countering people who claimed Jesus wasn't really flesh-and-blood human - because if that were true, his life and death couldn't speak into ordinary human life. For a modern reader, the point is that this letter is grounded in claimed direct experience, not abstract theory.

Lesson: I lived among people, ate with them, let them touch my hands - I wasn't a distant idea. Real love and real faith show up in real, physical, everyday presence, not just in words or beliefs kept private.

See Also: John 1:1-14 (the Gospel's near-identical opening about the "Word" made flesh) - same author, same theme; John 20:27 (Thomas touching Jesus's wounds).

1:2 (KJV) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)
(B:E Project) This life - eternal life itself - actually appeared in front of us. We saw it happen, and now we're testifying to you and telling you about this eternal life that existed with God the Father and then appeared to us in person.

Context: A parenthetical aside within John's long opening sentence, expanding on "the Word of life" from verse 1.

Meaning: John underlines that what he witnessed wasn't just a wise teacher passing through, but eternal life itself becoming visible and touchable in one person - something eternal showing up within ordinary human experience.

Lesson: I didn't come to hand you a doctrine to memorise - I came so life itself could be seen and known, not just believed in theory. Let that same life show through how you actually live, not just what you say.

See Also: John 1:4 ("In him was life; and the life was the light of men"); John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth, and the life").

1:3 **(KJV)** *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

(B:E Project) What we've seen and heard, we're telling you - so that you can share in the same close relationship we have. And that relationship we're describing is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Context: John completes his opening sentence here, stating his purpose for writing: inviting readers into shared "fellowship", a close, trusting relationship.

Meaning: John's motive for the whole letter is stated right here: he wants his readers to have the same real, secure connection with God he has. This letter is an invitation into relationship, not a lecture.

Lesson: Everything I taught was meant to be shared, not hoarded - John is passing on what he received from me, so the closeness he has with the Father becomes yours too. Faith grows by being given away, not kept private.

See Also: John 17:21 (Jesus's prayer that believers "may be one" with the Father and each other); John 15:4 ("Abide in me, and I in you").

1:4 **(KJV)** *And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

(B:E Project) We're writing all this down so that your joy will be complete - nothing missing.

Context: John states the emotional goal of the whole letter right at its start: full, overflowing joy, not guilt or anxiety.

Meaning: This sets the tone for everything that follows - even the parts about sin are meant to lead to joy, not shame. John isn't writing to make people feel worse; he's writing so a secure relationship with God can produce complete happiness, the opposite of religious fear or striving.

Lesson: I never wanted you weighed down by guilt - I want your joy to be full, complete, no hidden asterisk. If anything you hear about God leaves you more anxious rather than more at peace, look again - that isn't the real message.

See Also: John 15:11 ("that your joy might be full" - Jesus using almost identical words); John 16:24.

1:5 **(KJV)** *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

(B:E Project) Here's the core message we heard from Jesus and are passing on to you: God is light, and there isn't even a trace of darkness in him.

Context: This is the letter's foundational statement about God's character, introducing the light/darkness theme that runs through the rest of the letter.

Meaning: "Light" means complete honesty and goodness - nothing hidden, nothing twisted. This matters practically: if God is entirely trustworthy with no hidden agenda, a relationship with him doesn't require walking on eggshells - he is exactly what he appears to be.

Lesson: I told you I am the light of the world - John simply restates what I showed you: nothing two-faced about the Father, nothing hidden you need to fear. You can trust him completely, the way you'd trust someone who has never once deceived you.

See Also: John 8:12 ("I am the light of the world"); Psalm 27:1 ("The LORD is my light and my salvation").

1:6 **(KJV)** *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

(B:E Project) If we claim to be close to God while we're living dishonestly and secretly, we're lying - our actions don't match what's actually true.

Context: John applies the "light" principle directly to how believers live, warning against claiming closeness with God while hiding wrongdoing.

Meaning: This isn't about being perfect - it's about not pretending. John points out the gap between claiming a relationship with God and living an open, honest life. "Darkness" here means deliberately hiding things or refusing to be honest about who you really are.

Lesson: I have no interest in an image you perform for me - I want honesty, even messy honesty, over a polished lie. Bringing your real self into the light, flaws and all, is always safer and more freeing than hiding.

See Also: John 3:19-20 (people loving darkness because their deeds are evil); James 1:22 (be doers of the word, not hearers only).

1:7 **(KJV)** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

(B:E Project) But if we live openly and honestly, the way God himself is open and honest, then we genuinely connect with each other, and Jesus's sacrifice washes us completely clean from every wrong thing we've done.

Context: The positive counterpart to verse 6 - what walking "in the light" actually produces: real community and full cleansing.

Meaning: Honesty doesn't just please God abstractly - it's what makes real human connection possible too ("fellowship one with another"). Crucially, being cleansed isn't earned by being flawless; it comes through Jesus, so the past doesn't have to keep defining you.

Lesson: When you stop hiding and let yourself be seen honestly - by God and by others who love you - that's exactly where healing happens. I didn't ask you to earn a clean slate; I gave you one, so live in the open and let it do its work.

See Also: John 13:34-35 (love for one another as the mark of being Jesus's disciples); Hebrews 9:14 (the blood of Christ cleansing the conscience).

1:8 *(KJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
(B:E Project) If we claim we have no sin at all, we're only fooling ourselves, and we're not being honest.

Context: John corrects a possible overreaction to "walking in the light" - it doesn't mean claiming sinlessness, which would itself be self-deception.

Meaning: This verse protects against a dangerous kind of pride: pretending you have nothing to work on. Honestly admitting your flaws is a sign of health, not failure - denial is the real trap, not honesty.

Lesson: I have far more patience with someone who admits their faults than with someone who insists they have none - the second kind cannot be helped, because they won't ask. Let yourself be honestly imperfect; that's where I can actually meet you.

See Also: Romans 3:23 ("all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"); Luke 18:9-14 (the Pharisee and the tax collector).

1:9 *(KJV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
(B:E Project) But if we're honest and admit what we've done wrong, God will keep his word and do the right thing: he'll forgive us completely and clean us of everything, no exceptions.

Context: The positive resolution to verse 8 - what honest confession leads to: full, reliable forgiveness and cleansing.

Meaning: One of the most reassuring verses in the letter. It doesn't say God forgives grudgingly - it says he's "faithful and just", meaning forgiveness is guaranteed and built into who he is, not a favour you win. Honesty, not perfection, is the door to being clean.

Lesson: You never have to hide from me to protect yourself - the moment you're honest, I'm already faithful to forgive, every time, completely. There's no scorecard; just come clean and be clean.

See Also: Psalm 32:5 (David: "I acknowledged my sin... and thou forgavest"); Proverbs 28:13 ("whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy").

1:10 *(KJV) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
(B:E Project) If we insist we've never sinned, we're basically calling God a liar, and we're refusing to let his word be true in us.

Context: John closes the chapter by restating verse 8 even more strongly - denying sin altogether contradicts what God has already said about the human condition.

Meaning: This is the logical flip side of verse 9's promise. If God's message is that people need forgiveness and he freely gives it, claiming you don't need it isn't humility, it's rejecting the offer itself. Chapter 1 ends by clearing the ground: honesty about imperfection is where everything good starts.

Lesson: Refusing to admit you need help doesn't make you strong, it just closes the door I'm holding open. Let honesty be your starting point every day - it costs you nothing but pride, and it opens up everything.

See Also: 1 John 1:8-9 (its direct companion verses); Romans 3:4 ("let God be true, but every man a liar").

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Summary: 1 John 2

Chapter 2 of 1 John emphasises the importance of walking in obedience and love as proof of truly knowing God. It begins by reminding believers that while they should strive to avoid sin, Jesus Christ serves as their advocate and the atonement @ root-to-fruit.co.uk for their sins, and not just theirs, but for everyone. John then explains that our claim to know God is validated by keeping His commandments, warning that anyone who says they know Him but disobeys is a liar. The chapter introduces an "old" (and also "new") commandment to love one another, contrasting love with hatred, which keeps a person in spiritual darkness. John addresses different groups within the church—children, young men, and fathers—affirming their spiritual growth and understanding. He strongly cautions against loving the worldly system and its desires, which are temporary and oppose God's love. Finally, the chapter warns about false teachers, referred to as "antichrists," who deny Jesus as the Messiah. John reassures believers that they possess a divine anointing (the Holy Spirit) that teaches them the truth, urging them to remain in Christ so they can be confident and unashamed at His return.

2:1 *(KJV) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*
(B:E Project) John writes tenderly: I'm telling you all this so that you won't sin. But if you do sin, don't panic - we have someone on our side pleading our case before the Father: Jesus Christ, who is truly good and right.

Context: Opens chapter 2, following directly from chapter 1's honesty about sin - John clarifies the goal (not sinning) while offering reassurance for when it happens anyway.

Meaning: "Advocate" is a legal picture, like a trustworthy defence lawyer standing up for you. John isn't saying sin doesn't matter; he's saying even when it happens, you're not left alone to face it - someone is actively on your side.

Lesson: When you slip up, I don't turn away from you - I stand right there speaking up for you, because I know you and I'm on your side. Let that steady you rather than shame you into hiding.

See Also: Romans 8:34 (Christ "maketh intercession for us"); John 14:16 (the Spirit as another Comforter/Advocate).

2:2 *(KJV) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*
(B:E Project) And Jesus is the one who deals with the problem of sin - not just for us, but for absolutely everyone in the world.

Context: Continues verse 1's picture of Jesus as advocate, widening the scope from John's own community to all humanity.

Meaning: "Propitiation" means something that fully resolves a broken relationship - John says Jesus doesn't just help his own small circle but addresses this for everyone, everywhere. It's a statement about the enormous, unrestricted scale of the offer.

Lesson: I didn't come for one tribe, one group, one type of person who has it together - I came for everyone, no exceptions. Whoever you are, whatever you carry, that offer includes you.

See Also: John 3:16 ("God so loved the world"); 2 Corinthians 5:19 ("God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself").

2:3 *(KJV) And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*
(B:E Project) Here's how we can tell whether we truly know God: by whether we actually keep his instructions.

Context: Introduces a recurring test in this letter: genuine knowledge of God shows up in how a person lives, not just what they claim to believe.

Meaning: John isn't demanding perfection, but real relationship with God isn't just a feeling kept in your head - it naturally shapes behaviour, the way genuinely knowing someone well shows in how you act toward them.

Lesson: You'll know your connection to me is real not by how you feel on a given day, but by whether love and honesty are actually showing up in your life. Let your actions be the evidence, gently, not a test to fail but a natural fruit that grows.

See Also: John 14:15 ("If ye love me, keep my commandments"); James 2:17 (faith without works).

2:4 *(KJV) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*
(B:E Project) Anyone who claims "I know God" but doesn't actually live by what he says is lying, and the truth isn't really in them.

Context: The negative flip side of verse 3 - a direct warning against claiming faith while contradicting it in practice.

Meaning: Strong language aimed at self-deception, not condemnation of anyone simply struggling. If someone's whole life contradicts what they claim to believe, the claim itself isn't trustworthy, including to the person making it.

Lesson: I'd rather you were quietly honest about where you fall short than loudly claim a closeness with me your life doesn't back up. Integrity between what you say and what you do is what I actually care about.

See Also: Matthew 7:21 ("Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord... but he that doeth the will of my Father"); Titus 1:16.

2:5 *(KJV) But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*
(B:E Project) But whoever actually does what God says has genuinely let God's love reach its full expression in them - that's how we know we're truly connected to him.

Context: Balances verse 4's warning with reassurance - obedience isn't a hoop to jump through, it's the sign that love has taken root and matured.

Meaning: "Perfected" means "brought to its complete, intended state", not flawless performance. When someone's life increasingly matches what they've been taught, that's evidence love is genuinely real and growing in them.

Lesson: Every time you choose kindness or honesty over your first instinct, that's love maturing in you, not a test being passed. Notice that growth with encouragement, not judgement - it's proof something real is happening.

See Also: John 15:10 ("If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love"); 1 John 4:12 ("his love is perfected in us").

2:6 *(KJV) He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*
(B:E Project) Anyone who claims to be living in close connection with God should live the same way Jesus lived.

Context: Sets Jesus's own life as the practical model for what "walking in the light" and knowing God actually looks like day to day.

Meaning: This grounds the letter's ethical vision in something concrete: not an abstract rulebook but an actual life people could watch and imitate. It turns "be good" into "live like this specific person did."

Lesson: I didn't just teach you how to live - I lived it in front of you, so you'd have something real to follow, not just words to admire. Watch how I treated people who were struggling or afraid, and let that be your compass.

See Also: John 13:15 ("I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you"); 1 Peter 2:21.

2:7 *(KJV) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.*

(B:E Project) Friends, I'm not giving you some brand-new rule - it's actually the same old instruction you've had from the very start: the message you've already heard.

Context: Introduces the "old/new commandment" theme (to love one another), reassuring readers this isn't a novel demand but something already familiar.

Meaning: John is pastoral here - he doesn't want to seem like he's piling on a new burden. What he's about to say (love one another) is something they already know deeply; he's reminding, not adding.

Lesson: I'm not asking anything of you that you haven't already heard from the very beginning - love was always the point. When something feels heavy, it often helps to remember it's not new; you already carry it.

See Also: Leviticus 19:18 ("thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"); John 13:34.

2:8 *(KJV) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

(B:E Project) And yet, in another sense, it is a new commandment - true in Jesus and true in you - because the darkness is fading away and the real light is already shining.

Context: John plays with paradox - old and new at once - tying the love-command to the letter's larger light/darkness theme.

Meaning: The instruction to love is ancient, but it becomes newly real because something has actually changed: light has broken into the world through Jesus. It's not just moral advice repeated; real change is now genuinely possible.

Lesson: The old call to love isn't just a nice ideal anymore - I've made it genuinely possible, because light is already breaking through the dark places in you and the world. You're not straining after the impossible; you're stepping into something already dawning.

See Also: John 1:9 ("the true Light, which lighteth every man"); Romans 13:12 ("the night is far spent, the day is at hand").

2:9 *(KJV) He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

(B:E Project) Anyone who claims to be living in the light but hates another person is actually still in the dark, right now.

Context: Applies the light/darkness contrast concretely: hatred toward others, not correct doctrine alone, proves someone is really "in darkness."

Meaning: A sharp, practical test - not about correct beliefs but about how you treat people you dislike or resent. Claiming spiritual enlightenment while harbouring hatred exposes the claim as false.

Lesson: You can say all the right things about me and still be in the dark if there's someone you refuse to forgive or genuinely resent. Check your heart toward the people who annoy or hurt you - that's where the truth about you actually shows.

See Also: John 13:35 ("By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"); Matthew 5:22-24.

2:10 *(KJV) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

(B:E Project) But whoever genuinely loves others is living in the light, and there's nothing in them that trips others up.

Context: The positive counterpart to verse 9 - love for others is described as producing stability and safety, not just personal virtue.

Meaning: "None occasion of stumbling" suggests someone whose love makes them safe and steady for others - they don't trip others up morally or emotionally. Love has a protective, stabilising effect on the people around you.

Lesson: When you love people well, you become someone others can lean on without fear of being tripped up or let down. That's one of the quiet, practical rewards of real love - safety, for you and for everyone near you.

See Also: John 11:9-10 (walking in the day vs. stumbling in the night); Romans 14:13 (not putting a stumbling-block before a brother).

2:11 *(KJV) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

(B:E Project) But anyone who hates another person is in darkness, walks around in darkness, and doesn't even know where they're going - because that darkness has blinded them.

Context: Completes the contrast begun in verse 9, describing the disorienting, self-blinding effect of hatred.

Meaning: A vivid observation as much psychological as spiritual: hatred doesn't just harm the person hated, it disorients the hater, clouding their judgement and sense of direction in life.

- Lesson:** Hate doesn't just hurt the other person, it blinds you - it clouds your own judgement until you can't see where you're heading. Let go of it for your own sake as much as theirs; it's the only way to see clearly again.
- See Also:** John 12:35 ("he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" - almost identical phrase from Jesus); Proverbs 4:19.
- 2:12** *(KJV) I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*
(B:E Project) I'm writing to you, dear children, because your sins have already been forgiven - because of who Jesus is.
- Context:** Opens a short poetic passage (verses 12-14) addressing different groups within the church, starting with reassurance of forgiveness already accomplished.
- Meaning:** A statement of settled fact, not a future hope - forgiveness has already happened, rooted entirely in Jesus's identity, not the reader's own effort. It's meant purely as encouragement.
- Lesson:** Before I ask anything more of you, hear this first: you're already forgiven, not because you earned it but because of who I am. Let that settle in you before anything else - it's the foundation everything else stands on.
- See Also:** Acts 4:12 ("none other name... whereby we must be saved"); Ephesians 1:7 (redemption through his blood).
- 2:13** *(KJV) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*
(B:E Project) I'm writing to you, spiritually mature ones, because you know Jesus, who has existed from the very beginning. I'm writing to you, young and strong ones, because you have won the fight against the evil one. I'm writing to you, little ones, because you know the Father.
- Context:** Continues the address begun in verse 12 to three groups within the church - mature believers, those in vigorous struggle, and newer believers - each affirmed for something they genuinely possess.
- Meaning:** John honours each stage of faith without ranking them: deep settled knowing, active victory over temptation, and simple childlike knowledge of the Father are all treated as real and valuable, not as a hierarchy to climb.
- Lesson:** You don't need years of experience to genuinely know the Father, and I see the fights you've already won even the quiet ones nobody noticed. Whatever stage you're at, you already belong and you're already valued.
- See Also:** Matthew 18:3 (becoming as little children to enter the kingdom); Ephesians 6:10-11 (armour of God); Hebrews 5:14 (mature believers exercised by use).

- 2:14** *(KJV) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*
(B:E Project) I've written to you, spiritually mature ones, because you know Jesus, who has existed from the very beginning. I've written to you, young and strong ones, because you are strong, God's word lives in you, and you have won the fight against the evil one.
- Context:** John repeats and intensifies the address to "fathers" and "young men" from verse 13, now naming the source of the young men's strength: God's word living in them.
- Meaning:** The repetition shows John's deliberate, warm care in making sure each group feels personally seen. He also names where real strength comes from - not raw willpower, but truth absorbed and internalised over time.
- Lesson:** I don't mind repeating myself when it comes to reminding you that you're seen and valued. Your strength isn't conjured alone - it grows from truth you've let settle deep inside you, and that's what will still be there when you need it.
- See Also:** Psalm 119:11 ("Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"); Ephesians 6:17 (the sword of the Spirit).
- 2:15** *(KJV) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
(B:E Project) Don't set your heart on the world or the things in it. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love has no place in them.
- Context:** Opens a new section warning against loving "the world" - meaning a value system opposed to God, not the physical earth or the people in it.
- Meaning:** "The world" means a whole system built on greed, status and self-indulgence rather than love and integrity - not creation or people themselves, whom God loves deeply (John 3:16). You can't fully live by both value systems at once.
- Lesson:** I'm not asking you to reject the world's people, or its beauty, or its pleasures as such - just the hollow value system that promises fulfilment through status and stuff and never delivers. Choose carefully what you build your life around.
- See Also:** John 15:19 ("If ye were of the world, the world would love his own"); James 4:4 ("friendship of the world is enmity with God").
- 2:16** *(KJV) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*
(B:E Project) Because everything the world offers - the craving for physical pleasure, the craving for what looks good, and the pride of showing off what you have or achieve - none of that comes from the Father. It all comes from the world's system.

Context: John defines exactly what "loving the world" means with three concrete categories.

Meaning: These three - bodily cravings, visual/material craving, and pride in status or achievement - map remarkably well onto modern consumer pressure: chasing pleasure, possessions and appearance, and recognition. Ancient patterns, still exactly how advertising and comparison work today.

Lesson: Notice how often what pulls at you is one of these three: wanting a feeling, wanting to look a certain way, or wanting to be seen as impressive - none of them satisfy for long. Ask yourself whether it's really love or connection you're actually hungry for.

See Also: Genesis 3:6 (Eve saw the fruit good for food, pleasant to the eyes, desirable - the same three-part pattern); Matthew 4:1-10 (Jesus's own three temptations echo this structure).

2:17 *(KJV) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*
(B:E Project) The world and everything it craves is passing away - but whoever does what God wants will last forever.

Context: Concludes the "world" warning with a contrast between what's temporary and what's permanent.

Meaning: A simple, sobering observation: the things people chase for status or pleasure don't last, however real they feel now. Choosing love and integrity instead is choosing what actually endures.

Lesson: Everything that fades was never going to satisfy you forever anyway - build your life instead on love and honesty, the things that actually last. That's not self-denial, it's just choosing well with the time you have.

See Also: Matthew 6:19-20 (treasures on earth vs. treasures in heaven); Psalm 90:12 ("teach us to number our days").

2:18 *(KJV) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*
(B:E Project) Children, we're in a critical time. You've heard that an "antichrist" figure is coming - and in fact, many antichrists are already here, which tells us we're in that critical time.

Context: Opens a new warning section about false teachers who deny the truth about Jesus.

Meaning: "Antichrist" doesn't mean one cartoonish villain but anyone actively opposing or denying the truth about who Jesus was - John says many such people already existed in his own community's history. It's a call to discernment, not a doom prediction.

Lesson: Watch for people who twist or deny the truth of who I really am and what love actually requires - there have always been many such voices, not just one. Trust your discernment, and don't be shaken just because opposition shows up.

See Also: 2 John 1:7 (deceivers who deny Jesus came in the flesh); Matthew 24:24 (false christs and false prophets).

2:19 *(KJV) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*
(B:E Project) These people left our community - but they were never truly part of us. If they had really belonged, they would have stayed. Their leaving proved they were never really one of us.

Context: John explains the practical situation behind verse 18: certain teachers had actually split from the community.

Meaning: John is processing a painful church split with reassurance rather than bitterness - the departure, though hurtful, reveals something true rather than undermining the remaining community's stability.

Lesson: When someone leaves who was never truly aligned with love in the first place, let their leaving be clarity, not a wound you have to carry forever. You're not diminished by who chooses to walk away.

See Also: Matthew 13:24-30 (wheat and tares growing together until harvest); Acts 20:29-30 (Paul's warning of wolves rising from within).

2:20 *(KJV) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*
(B:E Project) But you have received an anointing from the Holy One, and because of that, all of you have insight.

Context: Reassures the readers directly after the warning about false teachers - they already have what they need to discern truth.

Meaning: "Anointing" refers to the Holy Spirit given to believers, an inner source of understanding that doesn't depend on any external teacher to hand them truth secondhand. Deeply reassuring: readers already have real spiritual discernment.

Lesson: I've already given you what you need to recognise truth from lies - trust the wisdom and conscience already within you, not just the loudest outside voice. You have more discernment than you give yourself credit for.

See Also: John 14:26 (the Holy Spirit will "teach you all things"); John 16:13 (the Spirit of truth guiding into all truth).

2:21 *(KJV) I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

(B:E Project) I haven't written to you because you don't know the truth - I've written because you do know it, and because no lie can come from the truth.

Context: John clarifies his motive again - reassurance, not correction of ignorance.

Meaning: Another warm, confidence-building statement: John isn't treating his audience as clueless or needing rescue from scratch, but as people who already grasp the truth and simply need encouragement to hold onto it.

Lesson: I'm not writing (through John) to teach you something brand new - I'm reminding you of what you already carry inside, so it doesn't get talked out of you by louder voices. Trust what you already know to be true and good.

See Also: John 8:32 ("ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"); 1 John 2:27 (the anointing that teaches).

2:22 ***(KJV)** Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

(B:E Project) Who's really lying? Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah. That person is an antichrist, because they're denying both the Father and the Son.

Context: John gives the specific theological content behind "antichrist" - it centres on denying who Jesus truly is.

Meaning: This makes the earlier warning concrete: the false teaching John's community faced specifically denied who Jesus really was. How you understand Jesus is, for John, inseparable from how you understand God himself.

Lesson: Who I am and who the Father is are bound together - you can't really claim to know one while denying the other. Hold onto the fullness of who I actually am, not a stripped-down or convenient version.

See Also: John 8:19 ("If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also"); 1 Corinthians 15:14-17 (Paul on the centrality of Christ's reality).

2:23 ***(KJV)** Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

(B:E Project) Whoever denies the Son doesn't have the Father either - but whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father too.

Context: John restates verse 22's principle even more plainly as a simple either/or statement.

Meaning: Deliberately simple: relationship with God comes through, not around, Jesus. Meant to cut through the confusion caused by false teachers, not to be complicated theology.

Lesson: I'm not a detour on the way to the Father - knowing me is how you actually get to know him. Don't let anyone convince you that you can skip past who I am and still arrive at the same place.

See Also: John 14:6 ("no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"); John 5:23 (honouring the Son as you honour the Father).

2:24 ***(KJV)** Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

(B:E Project) So hold on to what you were taught from the very beginning - let it stay in you. If it does, you'll remain connected to both the Son and the Father.

Context: John's practical instruction following the antichrist warnings: stay rooted in the original teaching rather than being pulled toward the new, false version.

Meaning: Reassuringly simple advice: you don't need something new or more sophisticated to stay secure in your faith - you just need to hold onto what you already learned at the start.

Lesson: You don't need a newer, flashier version of truth to keep growing close to me - what you first learned about love and honesty is still enough, if you let it stay rooted in you. Don't be talked out of the basics.

See Also: John 15:4 ("Abide in me, and I in you"); 2 Timothy 1:13-14 (holding the pattern of sound words).

2:25 ***(KJV)** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

(B:E Project) And this is what he promised us: eternal life.

Context: A brief, simple statement of the reward for remaining faithful, following directly from verse 24's call to hold on.

Meaning: Deliberately short and plain - the ultimate promise underlying everything in the letter is life that doesn't end, not a complicated system of achievement.

Lesson: Everything I've promised you comes down to this: life that doesn't run out, life that death can't touch. Let that be the quiet confidence underneath everything else you're working through.

See Also: John 3:16; John 10:28 ("I give unto them eternal life... neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand").

2:26 ***(KJV)** These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

(B:E Project) I've written all this to warn you about people trying to lead you astray.

Context: John explains his purpose for the preceding section on antichrists and false teaching: protective warning, not alarmism.

- Meaning:** A brief statement of protective intent - John's warnings weren't meant to create fear but to guard his readers from people with harmful motives.

Lesson: I want you protected from people who would twist truth to pull you away from love and honesty - that protection comes from knowing truth well enough to recognise a counterfeit. Stay grounded, and you'll be safe from being led astray.

See Also: Matthew 7:15 (false prophets in sheep's clothing); Ephesians 4:14 (no longer tossed about by every wind of doctrine).
- 2:27

(KJV) But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

(B:E Project) But the anointing you received from him stays in you, so you don't need anyone else to teach you from scratch - that same anointing teaches you everything, and it's true, not a lie. So, just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Context: Returns to and expands verse 20's point about the Spirit's inner teaching, closing the false-teacher warning with reassurance rather than fear.

Meaning: John balances real warning about false teachers with strong confidence in his readers' own inner spiritual compass - they carry a reliable inner guide, not dependent on any single external authority.

Lesson: You have real inner wisdom already given to you - trust it, test what you hear against it, and don't let fear of getting it wrong make you doubt what you already sense is true.

See Also: John 14:26 (the Spirit will teach you all things); Jeremiah 31:33-34 (the law written on hearts, needing no one to teach "know the LORD").
- 2:28

(KJV) And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

(B:E Project) And now, dear children, stay closely connected to him - so that when he appears, we'll be confident and not ashamed in front of him.

Context: Closes the chapter's warning section with a forward-looking hope: staying rooted in Christ now leads to confidence, not fear, at his eventual return.

Meaning: Addresses a real fear - dread of "being found out" - and reframes it: staying close to God now is precisely so that a future encounter is met with confidence, not shame.

Lesson: I don't want you living in dread of facing me one day - stay close to me now, in the small honest choices of each day, and that closeness itself removes the fear. Confidence isn't earned by perfection; it grows out of relationship.

See Also: 1 John 4:17-18 (boldness in the day of judgment, perfect love casting out fear); 2 Timothy 4:8 (a crown for those who love his appearing).

- 2:29

(KJV) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

(B:E Project) If you know that God is righteous, then you also know that everyone who lives righteously has been born of him.

Context: Closes chapter 2 and sets up chapter 3's theme of being "born of God" and its practical evidence in a righteous life.

Meaning: A bridge verse - moving from God's character to family resemblance: people who genuinely belong to God's family show it through how they live, echoing the letter's theme that real relationship shows up in real love and integrity.

Lesson: If you want to know whether new life has really taken root in someone - including yourself - look for the fruit of a good, honest, growing life. That's the family resemblance that actually matters.

See Also: John 1:12-13 ("born, not of blood... but of God"); 1 John 3:9-10 (children of God vs children of the devil).

CHAPTER 3

Chapter Summary: 1 John 3

- 1 John Chapter 3 explores the profound reality of being God's children and the distinct way believers should live. It begins by highlighting God's amazing love in adopting us, promising a future glory where we will be completely transformed to be like Him. This incredible hope motivates believers to pursue a life of purity, aligning their actions with Jesus. The chapter then sharply contrasts righteous behaviour, which reflects God's nature, with sin, which is linked to the devil. It emphasises that those genuinely connected to God do not continue in sin, as Christ came specifically to undo the devil's harmful influence. A central theme is the command to love one another, presented as the clearest sign of being God's child, in stark contrast to the destructive hatred exemplified by Cain. This love is not merely expressed through words, but through active, practical care for others, which provides confidence and assurance in our relationship with God and helps our prayers be answered. Ultimately, living according to God's commands—believing in Jesus and loving others—confirms our connection with Him through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 3:1

(KJV) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

(B:E Project) Look at the incredible love the Father has poured out on us - that we're actually called children of God! And that's exactly what we are. The reason the world doesn't understand us is that it never understood him either.

- Context:** Opens chapter 3 with an exclamation of wonder at being called God's children, building on chapter 2's closing theme of being "born of him."

- Meaning:** John wants readers to feel the scale of this claim - not servant, not distant follower, but "children" with all the closeness that implies. Being misunderstood by people who don't share this outlook is expected, not a sign something's wrong.

Lesson: You are not on the outside looking in, hoping to be let in eventually - you are already family, already loved as a child is loved, right now. If the world doesn't understand you for living this way, that's because it didn't understand me either.

See Also: John 1:12 (power to become the sons of God); Romans 8:15-16 (the Spirit of adoption, "Abba, Father").
- 3:2** *(KJV) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

(B:E Project) Dear friends, right now we are God's children, and we don't yet fully know what we'll become - but we do know that when Jesus appears, we'll be like him, because we'll see him exactly as he is.

Context: Continues the wonder of verse 1, adding a forward-looking hope about future transformation without claiming to know all the details.

Meaning: John is honest about the limits of what can be known now, while holding confident hope for the future - reassuring precisely because it doesn't overclaim: you don't need it all figured out to trust where things are heading.

Lesson: You don't need to understand everything about who you're becoming to trust that something good and real is happening in you. Let the mystery be okay; the direction is certain even when the details aren't.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 13:12 ("now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face"); Romans 8:29 (conformed to the image of his Son).
- 3:3** *(KJV) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

(B:E Project) And everyone who holds onto this hope keeps themselves pure, just as Jesus is pure.

Context: Draws a practical consequence from the hope of verse 2 - genuine hope for the future shapes how a person lives now.

Meaning: Not a rule imposed from outside; John presents purity as the natural response of someone who genuinely holds real hope, not a hoop to jump through to earn favour.

Lesson: When you really believe something good is coming, it naturally changes how you live now, gently, through genuine desire rather than force. Let hope, not fear or guilt, be what shapes your choices.

See Also: Titus 2:11-13 (grace teaching us to live soberly, looking for the blessed hope); Matthew 5:8 ("Blessed are the pure in heart").

- 3:4** *(KJV) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

(B:E Project) Everyone who sins is breaking God's law - because that's actually what sin is: breaking the law.

Context: Defines sin plainly, setting up the following verses' contrast between living in sin and living righteously.

Meaning: A simple working definition: sin is essentially living against the grain of what's right - not a mysterious concept but a straightforward description of choosing wrong over right.

Lesson: Sin isn't a mysterious dark force - it's simply choosing what's out of step with love and what's right. Naming it plainly makes it easier to recognise and turn away from, rather than something vague to feel anxious about.

See Also: Romans 4:15 ("where no law is, there is no transgression"); James 4:17 (sin as knowing to do good and not doing it).
- 3:5** *(KJV) And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

(B:E Project) And you know that Jesus appeared specifically to take away sins - and there's no sin in him at all.

Context: Sets Jesus apart from the sin problem just described - he's the solution, uniquely without the flaw he came to address.

Meaning: John highlights Jesus's unique sinlessness as the reason he's qualified to actually deal with the sin problem, like a genuinely healthy doctor able to treat a disease. It reinforces trust in the one offering the cure.

Lesson: I came specifically to deal with what weighs you down, not to add more weight - and I can do that precisely because I wasn't caught in the same trap myself. Trust that the one offering to help you is actually able to help.

See Also: Hebrews 4:15 (tempted in all points, yet without sin); 2 Corinthians 5:21 ("he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin").
- 3:6** *(KJV) Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

(B:E Project) Whoever remains genuinely connected to Jesus doesn't keep sinning as a way of life; whoever keeps sinning that way hasn't really seen or known him.

Context: Continues the contrast, describing ongoing, habitual sin as evidence of not truly knowing Jesus - read alongside chapter 1's admission that everyone sins.

Meaning: Best understood as talking about a settled pattern or direction of life, not sinless perfection - someone truly connected to Jesus is moving away from sin as an ongoing pattern, even while still stumbling at times.

- Lesson:** I'm not asking for flawlessness - I'm asking whether your life, overall, is turning toward love or settling comfortably into what harms you and others. Direction matters more than a perfect record.

See Also: 1 John 1:8-10 (everyone sins, but honesty brings forgiveness); Romans 6:1-2 (shall we continue in sin? God forbid).

3:7 *(KJV) Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

(B:E Project) Little children, don't let anyone mislead you on this: the person who actually does what's right is the one who is righteous - just as Jesus is righteous.

Context: A warning against being talked out of this straightforward truth, likely responding to false teachers minimising the importance of actual righteous living.

Meaning: John insists righteousness is demonstrated through action, not just claimed through words or belief - a theme repeated to counter teachers who separated belief from behaviour.

Lesson: Don't let clever arguments talk you out of the simple truth that doing good actually matters - real goodness shows up in what you do, not just what you're persuaded to believe. Trust that plain truth over more sophisticated-sounding excuses.

See Also: Matthew 7:16-20 ("by their fruits ye shall know them"); James 2:14-17.

3:8 *(KJV) He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

(B:E Project) Whoever makes a practice of sinning belongs to the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the very beginning. This is exactly why the Son of God appeared: to destroy what the devil has done.

Context: Sharpens the contrast into a spiritual battle: ongoing sin aligns someone with the devil's pattern, while Jesus's whole mission was to undo that pattern.

Meaning: This gives sin a bigger, more serious frame - participation in an older, destructive pattern that Jesus came specifically to dismantle. It's serious, but also hopeful: Jesus's mission is actively to destroy, not tolerate, what harms people.

Lesson: Every harmful, destructive pattern you struggle with, I came specifically to dismantle - you're not stuck fighting it alone. My purpose was undoing exactly this kind of damage, so let me actually help.

See Also: John 8:44 (the devil as a liar and murderer from the beginning); Genesis 3:15 (the promise of the seed who would crush the serpent).

3:9 *(KJV) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

- (B:E Project)** Whoever has been born of God doesn't make a practice of sinning, because God's own nature remains in them - they can't go on sinning that way, because they've been born of God.

Context: Restates verses 6 and 8's point even more strongly, describing a settled incompatibility between being truly "born of God" and habitual sin.

Meaning: Again describes a deep change of nature and direction, not sinless perfection (already ruled out in chapter 1) - like a plant whose roots have genuinely changed can't indefinitely keep producing the old fruit.

Lesson: When something in you has genuinely changed, it shows - not because you're forcing yourself, but because your very nature is now pulling a different direction. Trust that real inner change, even slow change, really does reshape what you do over time.

See Also: John 3:3-6 (born again, born of the Spirit); 2 Corinthians 5:17 ("if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature").
- 3:10** *(KJV) In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

(B:E Project) This is how you can tell the difference between children of God and children of the devil: anyone who doesn't do what's right isn't of God - and neither is anyone who doesn't love their brother.

Context: Summarises the chapter's argument so far and pivots directly into the love theme that dominates the rest of chapter 3.

Meaning: John draws the line in the plainest terms and treats failing to love others as equally serious as failing to do what's right generally - love isn't a bonus virtue, it's on the same level as righteousness itself.

Lesson: I judge the direction of a life less by its beliefs stated out loud and more by whether love for others is actually present - that's the clearest sign of whose you really are. Let love, especially toward people who are hard to love, be your honest measure.

See Also: John 8:44 (children of the devil, as Jesus said to his opponents); 1 John 4:20 (loving God while hating a brother).
- 3:11** *(KJV) For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

(B:E Project) Because this is the message you heard right from the start: we should love one another.

Context: Explicitly restates the letter's oldest, most repeated instruction, transitioning into the extended teaching on love that follows.

Meaning: John keeps circling back to this single instruction as the bedrock of everything else - one clear, consistently repeated command underlying the whole letter.

- Lesson:** If you remember nothing else I taught, remember this: love one another - it was the message from the very beginning, and it still is. Let that simplicity be a relief, not a burden; you don't need a complicated formula, just love.

See Also: John 13:34 ("A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another"); 1 John 2:7.
- 3:12** *(KJV) Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

(B:E Project) Don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his own brother. And why did he kill him? Because his own actions were evil, while his brother's were good.

Context: Gives a concrete negative example (Cain and Abel, from Genesis) to illustrate what hatred, taken to its extreme, actually leads to.

Meaning: John uses the oldest story of sibling conflict in Scripture to show how resentment of someone else's goodness, left unchecked, can grow into real destruction - a warning about where unaddressed envy and hatred ultimately lead.

Lesson: Watch for jealousy of someone else's goodness in yourself - left unaddressed, that small resentment is the same root that grew into Cain's violence. Catch it early and choose a different path; envy doesn't have to become anything bigger.

See Also: Genesis 4:3-8 (the Cain and Abel account); Hebrews 11:4 (Abel's faith-offering commended).
- 3:13** *(KJV) Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

(B:E Project) Don't be surprised, friends, if the world hates you.

Context: A short, direct statement bridging the Cain example and the following verses on love, preparing readers for hostility toward those who choose love and righteousness.

Meaning: Meant to remove shock and self-doubt when readers experience hostility for living differently - being hated for doing what's right isn't a sign something's wrong with you, it's an expected pattern, as old as Cain and Abel.

Lesson: When people push back against your goodness, don't take it as proof you're doing something wrong - sometimes it's proof you're doing something right that unsettles them. Stay steady in love anyway; don't let their reaction talk you out of it.

See Also: John 15:18-19 ("If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"); Matthew 5:11-12 (blessed when persecuted).
- 3:14** *(KJV) We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

- (B:E Project)** We know we've passed from death into life because we love other believers. Anyone who doesn't love stays in death.
- Context:** Presents love for others as concrete, felt evidence of a real inward shift from spiritual death to life.

Meaning: Gives readers a tangible, checkable way to know something real has changed in them - not a feeling to chase, but a pattern of love they can actually observe. Assurance grounded in something visible, not just anxious introspection.

Lesson: If you want proof that real life has taken hold in you, look at whether love is genuinely growing in how you treat people - that's more trustworthy than any feeling. Let that be a source of quiet confidence, not anxious self-checking.

See Also: John 5:24 ("passed from death unto life"); 1 John 4:7-8.
- 3:15** *(KJV) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

(B:E Project) Anyone who hates another person is, at heart, a murderer - and you know that no murderer has eternal life living in them.

Context: Escalates the Cain comparison from verse 12 into a direct statement equating hatred itself with murder, addressing the root rather than just the act.

Meaning: John, echoing Jesus's own teaching, locates the real moral issue in the internal attitude of hatred, not only the external act - serious, but also freeing: the work of dealing with hatred can happen inside, before it ever becomes an action.

Lesson: I already taught that hatred in the heart is the same root as murder - so deal with resentment early, in yourself, long before it could ever become an action. Catching it there is an act of real love, both toward others and toward your own future.

See Also: Matthew 5:21-22 (Jesus: anger toward a brother is judged like murder); Genesis 9:6 (the seriousness of taking life).
- 3:16** *(KJV) Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

(B:E Project) This is how we understand what real love is: Jesus laid down his life for us. And that means we should be willing to lay down our lives for each other too.

Context: Introduces the chapter's clearest picture of what love actually looks like: sacrifice, defined by Jesus's own example.

Meaning: John defines love concretely by pointing to one specific act of self-giving, then asks his readers to let that same posture - willingness to give of yourself for others - shape their own relationships, even if rarely to that literal extreme.

- Lesson:** I showed you what love actually costs and what it's actually worth by giving everything for you - now let that same willingness to give, even in small daily ways, shape how you treat the people around you.

See Also: John 15:13 ("Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"); Romans 5:8.
- 3:17

(KJV) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

(B:E Project) But if someone has plenty and sees a fellow believer in need, yet closes off their compassion from them - how can God's love really be living in that person?

Context: Brings the sacrificial love of verse 16 down to an everyday, practical scale: ordinary generosity toward someone in need.

Meaning: John moves from the extreme (laying down your life) to the ordinary (sharing what you have) - love isn't only proven in dramatic moments but tested constantly in small, everyday choices about generosity and compassion.

Lesson: You don't need a dramatic moment to prove your love is real - the small, everyday choice to notice someone's need and actually help is just as telling. Let your compassion be practical, not just something you feel privately.

See Also: James 2:15-16 (faith without works, seeing a brother naked and destitute); Luke 3:11 (whoever has two coats, share with him that has none).
- 3:18

(KJV) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

(B:E Project) Dear children, let's not just talk about love or say the words - let's actually love people through our actions, genuinely.

Context: A concise, direct call to action that sums up verses 16-17: love has to be practical, not merely verbal.

Meaning: One of the letter's most quotable, practical lines - love that only exists in speech isn't the real thing. A useful, checkable standard for anyone wanting to know whether their love for others is genuine.

Lesson: Kind words matter, but they're not the finish line - let your love show up in what you actually do for people, consistently, not just what you say to them. That's the difference between love that comforts and love that only sounds nice.

See Also: James 1:22 ("be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only"); Matthew 25:35-40 (whatever you did for the least of these).
- 3:19

(KJV) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

(B:E Project) This is how we'll know we belong to the truth, and how we'll be able to reassure our hearts in God's presence.

- Context:** Introduces the following passage on confidence before God, linking practical love (just described) to inner peace and assurance.

Meaning: John connects outward action (real love) to inward peace - practical love isn't just a duty, it's one of the ways a troubled conscience can find genuine reassurance and settle down.

Lesson: When your heart feels uneasy or uncertain, one true way back to peace is simply loving someone in front of you right now, in a real, practical way. Let action quiet the anxious mind, rather than trying to think your way out of it.

See Also: 1 John 4:17 (boldness in the day of judgment); Hebrews 10:22 (draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith).
- 3:20

(KJV) For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

(B:E Project) Because if our own heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows absolutely everything.

Context: Offers reassurance for the harder case: what happens when someone's own conscience accuses them, even after they've tried to love well.

Meaning: One of the letter's most comforting verses for anyone prone to guilt or self-criticism: God's judgement is bigger and more complete than a person's own inner critic - knowing "everything" means he sees the full context, not just the failures a harsh inner voice fixates on.

Lesson: Your own inner critic doesn't get the final word - I see far more of you than your harshest self-judgement does, including the parts you're too hard on yourself about. Let my larger, fuller knowledge of you be more trustworthy than your own anxious self-talk.

See Also: Psalm 103:13-14 (the LORD knows our frame, remembers we are dust); Romans 8:1 ("no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus").
- 3:21

(KJV) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

(B:E Project) But friends, if our heart doesn't condemn us, then we can approach God with confidence.

Context: Balances verse 20 with its positive counterpart - a clear conscience produces genuine boldness in relating to God.

Meaning: A healthy, uncomplicated picture: when you're not weighed down by unresolved guilt, approaching God becomes confident and open, not anxious or hesitant - reinforcing the letter's aim of full joy rather than fearful uncertainty.

Lesson: When your conscience is clear, come to me boldly, without hesitation or second-guessing - that confidence is exactly what I want for you. Don't hold back out of habit when there's nothing actually standing between us.

See Also: Hebrews 4:16 ("come boldly unto the throne of grace"); Ephesians 3:12 (boldness and access with confidence through faith).

3:22 *(KJV) And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

(B:E Project) And whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commands and do the things that please him.

Context: Extends the confidence of verse 21 into the practical area of prayer, connecting obedience with answered requests.

Meaning: Not a magic formula so much as a description of a healthy, trusting relationship: when someone's life is genuinely aligned with love and what pleases God, their desires tend to line up with what God wants, making answered prayer a natural outcome of that closeness.

Lesson: The closer your life grows to what genuinely pleases love and honesty, the more your own wants naturally align with what's actually good for you and others - that's part of why such prayers get answered. Trust that alignment more than any formula.

See Also: John 15:7 ("If ye abide in me... ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"); James 5:16 (the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man).

3:23 *(KJV) And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.*

(B:E Project) And here's his command, in a nutshell: believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he told us to.

Context: Condenses everything in the chapter (and much of the letter) into a single, simple two-part command: believe, and love.

Meaning: John simplifies what could feel like an overwhelming set of instructions into just two things - trust in Jesus, and love other people - showing the whole ethical and spiritual weight of the letter really comes down to something manageable and clear.

Lesson: I never wanted you overwhelmed by a thousand rules - just these two: trust me, and love each other. Keep coming back to this simple centre whenever life or teaching starts to feel complicated.

See Also: John 6:29 ("This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"); Mark 12:30-31 (the two greatest commandments).

3:24 *(KJV) And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

(B:E Project) Whoever keeps his commands lives in close union with God, and God lives in them. And this is how we know he lives in us: by the Spirit he has given us.

Context: Closes chapter 3 by summarising the mutual, close relationship that comes from obedience, and naming the Spirit as the concrete proof of that relationship.

Meaning: Ties together the chapter's themes - belief, love, obedience - into one description of intimate mutual indwelling, with the Holy Spirit given as tangible, felt evidence rather than something you have to just take on faith with no confirmation.

Lesson: You're not left guessing whether I'm really with you - the Spirit living in you is real, felt evidence, not just a hopeful idea. Trust that presence; it's the ongoing sign that we truly belong to each other.

See Also: John 14:23 ("we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"); Romans 8:9-11 (the Spirit of God dwelling in you).

CHAPTER 4

Chapter Summary: 1 John 4

*This chapter warns us to be careful about the spiritual messages and teachers we listen to, because many false teachers are active in the world. It provides a key test: if a message confirms that Jesus Christ truly came to earth as a human, it's from God. If it denies this, it's from an anti-Christ spirit. The chapter reassures believers that because God lives in them, they are stronger than any evil influences. It then powerfully shifts to the theme of love, explaining that genuine love comes from God, and showing love to others proves we know Him. God demonstrated His ultimate love by sending His only Son, Jesus, to bring us life and take away our sins. Because God loved us so much, we are commanded to love one another. This love helps us live without fear, even when thinking about future judgement, because perfect love removes all fear. The chapter concludes by emphasising © root-to-fruit.co.uk that true love for God must be shown through love for fellow believers; it's impossible to love God, whom we can't see, if we don't love the people we *can* see.*

4:1 *(KJV) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

(B:E Project) Don't believe every spiritual claim or teacher just because they sound convincing - test what they say against the truth. Many people out there are spreading false spiritual messages.

Context: Opens chapter 4; after chapter 3's focus on love in action, John turns to how to tell genuine spiritual teaching from false teaching, given the false teachers troubling these churches.

Meaning: This is permission to think critically rather than swallow every confident voice claiming spiritual authority. It's a call to healthy discernment - the kind that protects you from manipulation, dressed up in religious language or not.

Lesson: Jesus speaking: I want you to trust your judgement. Not everyone who speaks confidently about God is speaking truth - test what you hear against love and honesty, and don't be afraid to walk away from what doesn't ring true.

See Also: Matthew 7:15-20 (Jesus: false prophets known by their fruit); 1 Corinthians 12:10 (Paul: discerning of spirits as a gift); John 8:44 (Jesus on the spirit of falsehood).

4:2 *(KJV) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*
(B:E Project) Here's the test: any spiritual message that acknowledges Jesus Christ truly became a real human being comes from God.

Context: John gives the concrete test promised in 4:1 - the touchstone is whether a teaching affirms Jesus's genuine, physical humanity.

Meaning: This mattered enormously here - some teachers claimed Jesus only seemed human. John insists God fully entered ordinary, physical human life, meaning God is not distant or too 'holy' to care about your body, your struggles, your ordinary days.

Lesson: Jesus: My taking on real flesh and blood means nothing about your body, your struggles, your ordinary life is beneath God's concern. I entered fully into your world, not around it.

See Also: John 1:14 ('the Word was made flesh'); 2 John 1:7 (same test repeated); Philippians 2:7 (Paul: Christ took the form of a servant).

4:3 *(KJV) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*
(B:E Project) And any spirit that doesn't recognise that Jesus really came as a human isn't from God - this is the 'antichrist' spirit you've been warned about, and it's already active in the world.

Context: Continues the test from 4:2 with its negative form, naming this denial 'antichrist,' a term John introduced back in chapter 2.

Meaning: John isn't being alarmist for its own sake - he's naming a real pattern where teachings that strip away Jesus's genuine humanity end up distancing God from real human need and suffering. It's a caution against ideas that make faith feel remote and unreal.

Lesson: Jesus: Be wary of any teaching about me that makes me feel distant or untouchable - I came to be near you, not far off.

See Also: 1 John 2:18 (earlier mention of many antichrists); 2 John 1:7 (same warning repeated).

4:4 *(KJV) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*
(B:E Project) But you, dear friends, belong to God, and you have already won against these false influences - because the power within you is greater than the power at work in the world.

Context: John reassures the church that despite false teachers around them, they aren't vulnerable, because of God's presence within them.

Meaning: Deeply reassuring: you don't need to feel powerless against negativity, manipulation, or bad influence. There's a strength within you, rooted in love and truth, greater than whatever pressure the world exerts on you.

Lesson: Jesus: You have already overcome. Stop carrying the fight as though you might lose - the greater strength is already inside you, so act from confidence, not dread.

See Also: John 16:33 (Jesus: 'I have overcome the world'); Romans 8:31 (Paul: 'if God be for us, who can be against us').

4:5 *(KJV) They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*
(B:E Project) Those false teachers belong to the world's way of thinking, so that's what they talk about, and people who think the same way listen to them.

Context: Explains why false teaching spreads easily - it matches what the surrounding culture already wants to hear.

Meaning: A simple but sharp insight: messages that flatter popular opinion aren't automatically true just because they're widely accepted. Popularity and truth aren't the same thing.

Lesson: Jesus: Popularity was never my measure of truth - don't mistake a crowd's approval, or an idea's trendiness, for it actually being right.

See Also: John 15:19 (the world loves its own); Romans 12:2 (Paul: 'be not conformed to this world').

4:6 *(KJV) We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*
(B:E Project) We, however, speak from God, and anyone who knows God listens to us; whoever isn't from God won't. This is how we tell the spirit of truth from the spirit of deception.

Context: Closes the 'testing the spirits' section by contrasting the apostolic witness with the false teachers.

Meaning: Truth tends to resonate with people who are genuinely, honestly seeking it. This offers a simple compass: does a message lead you toward honesty and love, or away from it?

Lesson: Jesus: Truth isn't complicated to recognise when your heart is open - trust the quiet resonance you feel with what is real, and be suspicious of what only flatters you.

See Also: John 8:47 ('he that is of God heareth God's words'); John 10:27 ('my sheep hear my voice').

4:7 *(KJV) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

- (B:E Project)** Dear friends, let's love one another, because love comes from God; everyone who loves genuinely has been spiritually reborn and knows God.
- Context:** The pivot point of the letter - from testing false teaching to the great theme of love that dominates the rest of chapter 4.
- Meaning:** Love isn't just a nice feeling here - John treats it as actual evidence of a real connection with God. This turns the usual anxious question of 'do I know God?' into something wonderfully simple and available to anyone: love well, and you're already there.
- Lesson:** Jesus: When you love someone patiently, without needing anything back, that is you living in step with everything I taught. You don't need permission or credentials to love - just start.
- See Also:** John 13:34-35 (Jesus's new commandment to love); 1 Corinthians 13 (Paul on what love actually is).
- 4:8** ***(KJV)** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*
(B:E Project) Anyone who doesn't love doesn't know God - because God IS love, through and through.
- Context:** The theological centrepiece of the whole letter, not just 'God loves' but 'God is love,' grounding everything else John writes.
- Meaning:** One of the most radical statements in the Bible: not that God merely feels love sometimes, but that love is God's essential nature. If you want to understand what's ultimately behind reality, John says it's love - not judgement, not distance.
- Lesson:** Jesus: Whenever you're unsure what I'm actually like, look at love itself - patient, kind, without score-keeping - and you're looking straight at me.
- See Also:** John 3:16 (God's love shown in giving his Son); 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (Paul's description of what love looks like).
- 4:9** ***(KJV)** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*
(B:E Project) Here's how God's love was shown in practice: he sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could truly live through him.
- Context:** John moves from the abstract claim 'God is love' to its concrete demonstration in history - the sending of Jesus.
- Meaning:** This grounds 'God is love' in an actual, costly, deliberate event rather than a vague idea. It reshapes the picture of God from a distant judge into someone who acted first, generously, for others' benefit.
- Lesson:** Jesus: My coming wasn't an accident or an afterthought - it was love in action, aimed at giving you real life, not restricting it.

- See Also:** John 3:16; Romans 5:8 (Paul: God shows his love in that Christ died for us).
- 4:10** ***(KJV)** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
(B:E Project) This is real love: not that we loved God first, but that he loved us first, and sent his Son to deal fully with our wrongdoing.
- Context:** John clarifies the direction of love - it originates from God, not as something humans achieve or earn through good behaviour.
- Meaning:** This removes a huge source of anxiety: you don't have to love God perfectly first to earn love back. He moved first. This is generosity, not a transaction you could ever fail to meet.
- Lesson:** Jesus: You don't need to prove yourself worthy before you're loved - the love came first, unearned, so you can rest rather than strive.
- See Also:** Romans 5:8 (Paul: God's love shown while we were still sinners); John 15:16 ('ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you').
- 4:11** ***(KJV)** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*
(B:E Project) Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we ought to love one another too.
- Context:** John draws out the practical implication of 4:9-10 - God's love toward us creates an obligation to love each other, not to earn anything but in grateful response.
- Meaning:** The logic is beautifully simple: love received naturally overflows into love given. It isn't an external rule but a natural consequence of having genuinely experienced being loved.
- Lesson:** Jesus: Let what you've received shape what you give. You don't love others to earn love - you love others because you've already been loved enough to have some to spare.
- See Also:** 1 John 4:19 (we love because he loved us first); Ephesians 4:32 (Paul: forgive one another, as God forgave you).
- 4:12** ***(KJV)** No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*
(B:E Project) No one has ever actually seen God - but when we love one another, God lives in us, and his love becomes fully real and complete through us.
- Context:** Answers an implicit question: if God is invisible, how do we relate to him? John's answer is love, echoing 1:1-2's theme of the unseen being made visible.

- Meaning:** A wonderfully practical answer to something people often struggle with - how do you connect with an invisible God? Love someone well, and that invisible reality becomes visible and whole through you.

Lesson: Jesus: You don't need a vision or a mystical experience to find me - love someone well today, and you'll have done exactly that.

See Also: John 1:18 ('no man hath seen God at any time'); John 13:35 ('by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples').
- 4:13** *(KJV) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

(B:E Project) Here's how we know we live in him and he lives in us: he has given us his Spirit.

Context: John offers a further ground of assurance alongside love - the presence of God's Spirit within believers, echoing chapter 3's theme of confident assurance.

Meaning: This offers a felt, inward assurance - not something manufactured through effort, but something given, recognised by an inner sense of connection and confirmed by the love it produces in your life.

Lesson: Jesus: The sense of connection you feel isn't wishful thinking - it's real, given as a gift, not earned by performance.

See Also: Romans 8:16 (Paul: the Spirit bears witness with our spirit); John 14:17 (Jesus promises the Spirit).
- 4:14** *(KJV) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

(B:E Project) And we ourselves have seen it and can testify: the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Context: John, as an eyewitness apostle, reasserts his personal testimony (echoing 1:1-3) as grounds for what he's claiming.

Meaning: Not abstract theory for John - he's speaking as someone who personally witnessed Jesus's life. His testimony carries the weight of firsthand experience, not secondhand rumour.

Lesson: Jesus: The people who knew me best saw rescue and love in what I did, not condemnation - you can trust that account.

See Also: 1 John 1:1-3 (John's eyewitness opening); John 3:17 ('God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but to save it').
- 4:15** *(KJV) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

- (B:E Project)** Whoever openly acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God - God lives in that person, and they live in God.

Context: Restates the 'confessing Jesus' theme from 4:2-3 in positive, inviting terms, linking honest acknowledgement with mutual indwelling.

Meaning: The bar here is refreshingly simple - not flawless behaviour or perfect understanding, but honest acknowledgement of who Jesus is. That's enough to open the door to a real, mutual relationship.

Lesson: Jesus: I'm not asking for perfection from you, just honesty about who I am to you - that's enough to open the door to real closeness.

See Also: Romans 10:9 (Paul: confess with your mouth, believe in your heart); John 15:4 (abiding, mutual indwelling).
- 4:16** *(KJV) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

(B:E Project) And we have come to know and trust the love God has for us. God is love, and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them.

Context: Restates 4:8's central claim, now framed personally as something John and his readers have come to know and trust through lived experience.

Meaning: An invitation to shift from anxiously trying to prove yourself to God, to simply trusting that love is safe ground to live in - and that living there is the same as living in God himself.

Lesson: Jesus: Let yourself trust love rather than doubt it - make your home there, and you've made your home with me.

See Also: 1 John 4:8 ('God is love'); John 15:9-10 ('abide in my love').
- 4:17** *(KJV) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

(B:E Project) This is how love reaches its full completion in us, giving us confidence for the day of judgement: because as Jesus is, so are we in this world.

Context: John connects mature love with fearless confidence about facing final judgement, developing chapter 3's theme of confidence before God.

Meaning: Rather than dreading judgement, John says fully grown love produces boldness, not fear - because believers are meant to reflect Jesus's own character in the world right now.

Lesson: Jesus: I don't want you approaching any reckoning with dread - let love do its full work in you, and confidence, not fear, will be what you carry.

See Also: 1 John 3:21 (confidence before God); Romans 8:1 (Paul: no condemnation for those in Christ).

4:18 *(KJV) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

(B:E Project) There's no fear in love; genuine, mature love drives fear out completely, because fear involves dread of punishment - and anyone who's still afraid hasn't yet let love do its complete work in them.

Context: The most famous verse of the letter, deepening 4:17 - love and fear are shown to be fundamentally incompatible.

Meaning: Enormously freeing for anyone living with chronic anxiety, self-doubt, or a fear of 'not being good enough.' Real love pushes fear out the door - the goal isn't to be frightened into good behaviour, but to be so secure in love that fear loses its grip.

Lesson: Jesus: I never wanted you relating to me out of dread - fear and punishment-thinking aren't the relationship I offer. Let love in fully, and watch fear lose its hold on you.

See Also: Romans 8:15 (Paul: not a spirit of fear, but adoption); 2 Timothy 1:7 (Paul: God has not given us a spirit of fear).

4:19 *(KJV) We love him, because he first loved us.*

(B:E Project) We love because he loved us first.

Context: A short, pivotal summary verse restating the chapter's whole logic - love originates from God, not from us.

Meaning: This closes the loop opened in 4:10 - all human love toward God and others is a response, not an initiation. It takes the pressure off 'trying hard enough' to love, grounding it instead in gratitude for love already received.

Lesson: Jesus: Your capacity to love isn't something you have to dig up from nothing - it's a response to being loved first. Rest in that, and loving others will feel less like effort and more like overflow.

See Also: 1 John 4:10 (God loved us first, and sent his Son); John 15:16 ('I have chosen you').

4:20 *(KJV) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

(B:E Project) If someone says 'I love God' while hating a fellow believer, they're lying - because if you don't love the person you can see right in front of you, you can't possibly love the God you've never seen.

Context: John's sharp, practical test of genuine love, echoing chapter 3's Cain and Abel contrast and closing the argument linking love of God with love of others.

Meaning: A bracing, honest challenge to any spirituality that claims love for God while mistreating actual people. Real love isn't proven by feelings or claims - it's proven in how you treat the people right in front of you.

Lesson: Jesus: Don't let devotion to me become an excuse to avoid the harder, more visible work of loving people you can actually see and touch - that's where love is tested and proven real.

See Also: Matthew 25:40 ('as ye have done it unto one of the least of these'); 1 John 3:15 (hating a brother compared to murder).

4:21 *(KJV) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

(B:E Project) And this is the command he's given us: whoever loves God must also love their brother or sister.

Context: Closes chapter 4 by restating, as a direct command, the inseparable link between loving God and loving other people.

Meaning: John ties the whole chapter together in one non-negotiable instruction - love of God and love of people aren't two separate things, they're one single calling.

Lesson: Jesus: I never separated these two loves - loving me and loving each other were always meant to be one and the same thing. Don't let anyone tell you they can be split apart.

See Also: Matthew 22:37-39 (the greatest commandments); John 13:34 (the new commandment to love).

CHAPTER 5

Chapter Summary: 1 John 5

Chapter 5 of 1 John focuses on the assurance that comes from believing in Jesus Christ. It teaches that true faith in Jesus means you are born of God, and that loving God naturally leads to loving His children and obeying His commands, which are not difficult. The chapter explains that our faith in Jesus empowers us to overcome the world's challenges. It highlights how God provides clear evidence about Jesus through the Spirit, water, and blood, and that trusting this message gives us eternal life through Jesus, the Son of God. The author encourages believers to pray with confidence, knowing God hears requests that align with His will. Finally, it distinguishes between different types of sin, assures believers that they are protected from the evil one, and affirms that through Jesus, we know the one true God and possess lasting life.

5:1 *(KJV) Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

(B:E Project) Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been spiritually reborn as a child of God, and everyone who loves the Father also loves his other children.

Context: Opens chapter 5, linking back to chapter 4's love theme and introducing the theme of faith and being 'born of God.'

- Meaning:** John connects three things as inseparable: believing in Jesus, being spiritually reborn, and loving fellow believers as family - genuine faith always shows up as care for others in the same family.

Lesson: Jesus: If you truly love the Father, that love will naturally spill over onto his other children too - you can't claim one without the other.

See Also: John 1:12-13 (born of God, not of human will); John 3:3 (born again).
- 5:2

(KJV) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

(B:E Project) This is how we know we truly love God's children: by loving God and doing what he commands.

Context: John gives a test that runs the other way from 5:1 - genuine love for fellow believers is confirmed by a real relationship with God and obedience to him, not just warm feeling.

Meaning: This protects 'love' from becoming vague sentimentality - real love for people is rooted in and measured by a genuine relationship with God and a commitment to what's actually good.

Lesson: Jesus: Loving people well and loving me well aren't competing priorities - they check and strengthen each other.

See Also: John 14:15 ('if ye love me, keep my commandments').
- 5:3

(KJV) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

(B:E Project) Loving God means keeping his commands - and his commands aren't a heavy burden.

Context: John reassures readers that obedience to God isn't oppressive, following on from the previous verse's link between love and obedience.

Meaning: This directly counters any picture of God's instructions as a crushing weight or endless rulebook. Living God's way, rooted in love, is meant to be light and freeing, not exhausting.

Lesson: Jesus: My yoke really is easy and my burden really is light - when you love, obedience stops feeling like a chore and starts feeling natural.

See Also: Matthew 11:30 ('my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'); Deuteronomy 30:11 (the command is not too hard for you).
- 5:4

(KJV) For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

- (B:E Project)** Everyone born of God overcomes the world - and this is the victory that conquers the world: our faith.

Context: John introduces the theme of 'overcoming the world,' a favourite idea in his writing (see John 16:33), grounding it in trust rather than effort.

Meaning: An empowering claim - you're not meant to be crushed or defined by the pressures, fears, or values of the surrounding culture. Trust in something bigger and more reliable than those pressures is what lets you rise above them.

Lesson: Jesus: The world's pressure to conform, to fear, to chase status - you don't have to be ruled by it. Trust is what sets you free from its grip.

See Also: John 16:33 (Jesus: 'I have overcome the world'); 1 John 4:4 ('greater is he that is in you').
- 5:5

(KJV) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

(B:E Project) Who overcomes the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Context: Restates 5:4's claim in question-and-answer form, pinpointing exactly what kind of faith produces this victory.

Meaning: John is specific here - it isn't vague optimism or generic spirituality that overcomes life's pressures, but a particular trust: that Jesus genuinely reveals what God is like and can be relied upon.

Lesson: Jesus: Anchoring your trust in me isn't a small, abstract thing - it's the very thing that gives you real freedom from what the world tries to make you fear or chase.

See Also: John 20:31 (John's Gospel written 'that ye might believe').
- 5:6

(KJV) This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

(B:E Project) This is the one who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ - not by water only, but by water and blood; and the Spirit testifies to this, because the Spirit is truth.

Context: A dense verse likely aimed at the false teachers again - countering a view that separated the divine 'Christ' from the human Jesus at his death, accepting only his baptism ('water') but not his real, bloody death.

Meaning: John insists Jesus's whole story - baptism and death alike - was genuinely, physically real, not symbolic or partial. The Spirit backs this up as reliable truth, not speculation.

Lesson: Jesus: My whole story - beginning and end, water and blood - was real, for you. Nothing about my life or death was a performance; it was genuine, and it was for your sake.

See Also: John 19:34 (blood and water from Jesus's side at the cross); John 1:32-33 (the Spirit descending at Jesus's baptism).

5:7 *(KJV) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*
(B:E Project) There are three witnesses in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit - and these three are one.

Context: Continues the 'witness' theme from 5:6. Worth noting: most scholars agree this exact wording about 'three that bear record in heaven' was added centuries after John wrote, in later Latin manuscripts - the earliest Greek manuscripts move straight from verse 6 to verse 8's earthly witnesses.

Meaning: As it stands in the KJV, the verse affirms unity between Father, Son ('the Word'), and Spirit - three persons yet one being, all backing up the truth about Jesus. Whether or not this precise sentence is original to John, the underlying idea - that God in his fullness testifies to who Jesus is - runs through the rest of the letter regardless.

Lesson: Jesus: Everything that is truly God stands united behind who I am and what I came to do for you - you're not relying on a single, shaky source.

See Also: John 1:1 ('the Word was God'); Matthew 28:19 (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit named together).

5:8 *(KJV) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*
(B:E Project) And there are three witnesses on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood - and all three agree.

Context: Pairs with 5:6-7, giving the earthly counterpart to the heavenly witnesses, reinforcing the reliability of what's testified about Jesus.

Meaning: John stacks up multiple, independent lines of evidence, all pointing the same direction, to reassure readers that what they've believed about Jesus rests on solid, corroborated testimony, not a single shaky claim.

Lesson: Jesus: You don't have to take this on blind faith alone - the truth about me was backed up from more than one direction, so you can trust it with a settled mind.

See Also: John 19:34-35 (John's own eyewitness account of blood and water); Deuteronomy 19:15 (two or three witnesses establish a matter).

5:9 *(KJV) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*
(B:E Project) We accept human testimony readily enough - but God's testimony is even greater, and this is that testimony: God himself has testified about his Son.

Context: John argues from lesser to greater: if we trust ordinary human witnesses in daily life, how much more should we trust God's own testimony about Jesus.

Meaning: A reasonable, almost courtroom-style argument: we rely on human witnesses all the time; John says the evidence behind Jesus carries even greater weight, since it ultimately comes from God himself.

Lesson: Jesus: You trust people's word about things every day - trust, too, that what's been testified about me carries real weight, worth resting your confidence on.

See Also: John 5:36-37 (Jesus: the Father himself has borne witness of me).

5:10 *(KJV) He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*
(B:E Project) Whoever believes in the Son of God carries this testimony within themselves; whoever doesn't believe God has effectively called God a liar, by refusing to accept what God has testified about his Son.

Context: John personalises the witness theme - believing becomes an inward, experienced confirmation, not just intellectual agreement with facts.

Meaning: There's a strong warning here about the seriousness of rejecting the testimony, but also a beautiful promise - believing isn't just adopting a fact, it comes with an inward, felt confirmation of its truth.

Lesson: Jesus: When you trust me, you'll find that trust confirmed from the inside, not just argued from the outside - that inner conviction is real and worth honouring.

See Also: Romans 8:16 (Paul: the Spirit bears witness with our spirit).

5:11 *(KJV) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*
(B:E Project) And here's the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is found in his Son.

Context: John states plainly what the witness described in 5:6-10 has been pointing toward - the gift of eternal life located specifically in Jesus.

Meaning: This reframes 'eternal life' not as a reward earned through good behaviour, but as a gift already given, found in relationship with Jesus - about the depth and quality of life now, not only duration after death.

Lesson: Jesus: This life I'm offering isn't a prize dangled far off for you to chase - it's already given, available to you now, found simply in knowing me.

See Also: John 17:3 ('this is life eternal, that they might know thee'); John 10:10 ('I am come that they might have life').

5:12 *(KJV) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

- (B:E Project)** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever doesn't have the Son doesn't have life.

Context: A stark, simple restatement of 5:11 in binary terms - life is inseparably bound up with relationship to Jesus.

Meaning: John simplifies things to their essence - real, full life, not mere existence, comes through connection with Jesus. It's a plain claim about depth and meaning of life, not hedged or qualified.

Lesson: Jesus: I'm not offering you one option among many for a meaningful life - I'm offering you the real thing itself, freely, if you'll receive it.

See Also: John 14:6 ('I am the way, the truth, and the life').
- 5:13

(KJV) *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

(B:E Project) I've written all this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know for certain that you have eternal life, and so you may go on believing in his name.

Context: A summary statement, echoing John's Gospel's own stated purpose (John 20:31), telling readers plainly why he's written this letter.

Meaning: This is the whole letter's purpose distilled: not to make readers anxious about whether they measure up, but to give them settled, confident assurance of what they already have. It's written for reassurance, not to instil doubt.

Lesson: Jesus: I don't want you spending your life wondering and worrying whether you're 'in' or good enough - this whole letter exists so you can rest, certain, in what's already yours.

See Also: John 20:31 (the Gospel of John's parallel purpose statement); 1 John 5:20.
- 5:14

(KJV) *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

(B:E Project) And this is the confidence we have in approaching him: that if we ask anything in line with his will, he hears us.

Context: Moves to a new practical theme - confident prayer - grounded in the assurance just described in 5:13.

Meaning: A grounded, unpretentious view of prayer - not a magic formula, but honest confidence that comes from being genuinely heard when your requests align with what's genuinely good.

Lesson: Jesus: Come to me honestly with what's on your heart - you don't need special words, just an aligned, honest ask, and know that you're heard.

- See Also:** John 15:7 ('abide in me... ask what ye will'); Matthew 6:10 ('thy will be done').
- 5:15

(KJV) *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

(B:E Project) And if we know he hears whatever we ask, we know we already have what we've asked for.

Context: Extends 5:14's confidence in prayer into settled assurance about receiving what's requested.

Meaning: This builds on trust rather than anxious repetition - once you know you're heard, there's a settled peace about the outcome, rather than constant worry over whether the request 'worked.'

Lesson: Jesus: Ask, then let go of the anxious checking-back - trust does the resting for you.

See Also: Mark 11:24 ('what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them').
- 5:16

(KJV) *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*

(B:E Project) If you see a fellow believer committing a sin that doesn't lead to death, pray for them, and God will give them life - for those whose sin isn't 'unto death.' There is a sin that leads to death; I'm not saying you should pray about that one.

Context: A difficult, much-debated verse distinguishing between two categories of sin, in the context of praying for one another.

Meaning: John doesn't fully define 'sin unto death' - most likely he means the deliberate, hardened rejection of Jesus altogether that he's been warning about, not ordinary wrongdoing. The reassuring point for everyday struggles and failures is clear: pray for each other, and expect that prayer to genuinely help.

Lesson: Jesus: Don't be afraid to pray for a friend who's stumbled - that kind of prayer really does something. Save your worry for wilful, hardened rejection of love and truth, not for ordinary human failure.

See Also: James 5:15-16 (prayer for one another, confessing faults); Hebrews 6:4-6 (a related warning about deliberate falling away).
- 5:17

(KJV) *All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*

(B:E Project) All wrongdoing is sin - but there is sin that doesn't lead to death.

Context: Clarifies 5:16 slightly, affirming that all sin matters morally while maintaining the distinction between ordinary sin and the more serious 'sin unto death.'

- Meaning:** John balances honesty (wrongdoing is real and matters) with reassurance (not every failure is catastrophic or unforgivable). It resists both denying wrongdoing and despairing over it.

Lesson: Jesus: Take your failures seriously, but don't let them convince you that you're beyond reach - most of what trips you up isn't the unforgivable kind, so don't carry it like it is.

See Also: 1 John 1:9 (confession and forgiveness); Romans 3:23 (Paul: all have sinned).
- 5:18** *(KJV) We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

(B:E Project) We know that whoever is born of God doesn't keep on sinning - the one born of God keeps themselves safe, and the evil one cannot touch them.

Context: Echoes chapter 3's teaching that those truly 'born of God' don't live in habitual sin, adding here the reassurance of protection from evil.

Meaning: Not a claim of sinless perfection - chapter 1 already insisted everyone sins - but a description of a settled life-direction away from habitual wrongdoing, kept safe within a real, protective relationship with God.

Lesson: Jesus: You're not left defenceless - there's a real protection over your life as you stay close to what's true and good, even amid an imperfect world.

See Also: 1 John 3:9 (born of God does not commit sin as a way of life); John 17:15 (Jesus prays for protection from evil).
- 5:19** *(KJV) And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

(B:E Project) We know we belong to God, while the whole world lies in the grip of the evil one.

Context: A blunt statement contrasting the security of believers with the state of the wider world, part of the letter's closing run of confident 'we know' statements.

Meaning: John draws a sharp line here, but the emphasis for the reader is reassurance: whatever chaos or corruption you observe in the wider world, you can know with confidence which side you belong to.

Lesson: Jesus: Don't measure your security by the state of the world around you - you can know, settled and sure, exactly where you stand with me.

See Also: John 17:14-16 (in the world but not of it); 2 Corinthians 4:4 (Paul: 'the god of this world').
- 5:20** *(KJV) And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

- (B:E Project)** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, so that we can know the one who is true - and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Context: A climactic summary just before the letter's final, abrupt sentence, gathering up the letter's core claims about Jesus, knowledge of God, and eternal life.

Meaning: John caps his argument with a confident, joyful summary - real understanding of what's ultimately true and real is available, found concretely in Jesus, not left as an unreachable mystery.

Lesson: Jesus: I came so you could actually understand and know what's real and true - not be left guessing. That clarity, and the life that comes with it, is my gift to you.

See Also: John 17:3 ('this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God'); John 1:18 ('no man hath seen God at any time... the only begotten Son... hath declared him').
- 5:21** *(KJV) Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

(B:E Project) Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

Context: The letter's abrupt, famous closing line - after chapters of warmth about love and assurance, John ends with this sharp, brief warning, addressing his readers tenderly ('little children') one last time.

Meaning: An 'idol' here means anything that takes God's place as the thing you ultimately trust, serve, or organise your life around - status, money, approval, fear itself. After a letter overflowing with reassurance about real love, John's parting word is a caution: don't let anything false take the place of what's real.

Lesson: Jesus: After everything I've said about love, this is my last request: don't let anything less than the real thing take its place in your life - not fear, not approval, not status, not comfort. Keep your heart free for what's real.

See Also: Exodus 20:3-4 (the first commandments, against other gods and idols); 1 Corinthians 10:14 (Paul: 'flee from idolatry'); John 4:23-24 (worship 'in spirit and in truth').

