



BOOK LXII | NEW TESTAMENT | GENERAL EPISTLE

The First Letter of John

Light, Love, Truth, and Assurance in the Son of God

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

— 1 John 5:13

CONTENTS OF THIS STUDY PACK

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 01 | Visual Overview Infographic | 02 | Chapter-by-Chapter Narrative Arc |
| 03 | Key Themes & Theological Insights | 04 | Symbolism & Imagery |
| 05 | Small Group Discussion Guide | 06 | Key Characters |
| 07 | Practical Application | | |

VISUAL OVERVIEW INFOGRAPHIC



Full-page visual overview — structure, themes, symbols, and practices at a glance.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Read the letter as a pastoral movement from fellowship in the light to confidence in the Son.

SECTION 01 | 1 John 1–2

THE WORD OF LIFE AND THE LIGHT OF GOD

1:1–4

John announces the eternal Word of life—heard, seen, and touched—so readers may share fellowship with the Father and his Son.

1:5–2:17

God is light. Walking in that light includes honest confession, Christ’s advocacy, obedience, love for fellow believers, and resistance to rival loves.

2:18–29

Conflicting spiritual claims are tested by their confession of the Son. Those who remain in the truth are called to remain in Christ with confidence.

SECTION 02 | 1 John 3

CHILDREN OF GOD WHO LOVE IN DEED AND TRUTH

3:1–10

The Father’s love names believers as his children. That identity reshapes hope and the pursuit of a life that reflects Christ.

3:11–24

Love is made concrete by Christ’s self-giving and by meeting a brother or sister’s real need. Love strengthens assurance and prayer.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Read the letter as a pastoral movement from fellowship in the light to confidence in the Son.

SECTION 03 | 1 John 4

TRUTH TESTED AND LOVE PERFECTED

4:1–6

Believers test spiritual claims by the confession that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and by faithfulness to the apostolic message.

4:7–21

God is love. His love is revealed in sending his Son, and those who receive it are called to love one another without fear.

SECTION 04 | 1 John 5

FAITH, LIFE, AND CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD

5:1–12

Faith in Jesus as the Christ joins love for God and his children. God's testimony centers on the life given in his Son.

5:13–21

John closes with assurance of eternal life, confidence in prayer, care for one another, discernment, and a final call to keep from idols.

KEY THEMES

01 GOD IS LIGHT

God's light exposes darkness without abandoning his people. Fellowship rests on Christ's cleansing and truthful confession rather than denial.

MODERN APPLICATION Bring one hidden failure or fear into God's light through honest confession and receive forgiveness rather than managing appearances.

1 John 1:5

02 GOD IS LOVE

Love begins in God's initiative: he sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for sin. Christian love becomes visible, costly, and practical.

MODERN APPLICATION Choose one concrete act of love that meets a real need instead of offering only warm intentions.

1 John 4:19

03 JESUS CHRIST CAME IN THE FLESH

John insists that the eternal Son truly came in human flesh. Truth about Jesus protects the church from spirituality detached from the real gospel.

MODERN APPLICATION Measure spiritual teaching by whether it honors the biblical Jesus—fully God, truly human, crucified and risen.

1 John 4:2

04 ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

John writes so believers may know they have eternal life. Assurance grows through trust in Christ, love for God's people, and confidence before God.

MODERN APPLICATION When assurance feels fragile, return to God's testimony about his Son and practice the next clear step of love and obedience.

1 John 5:13

SYMBOLISM & IMAGERY

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Light pictures God's holy, truthful life; darkness pictures falsehood, sin, and alienation. Walking in light means confessing rather than pretending.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The image joins holiness and grace: God's light names what is wrong while Christ's cleansing makes fellowship possible.

1 John 1:5–10

THE ANOINTING

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The anointing points to Spirit-given truth by which believers remain in Christ and discern claims that deny the Son.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

Discernment is not suspicion for its own sake; it is remaining in the truth God has made known in Christ.

1 John 2:20–27

SYMBOLISM & IMAGERY

CHILDREN OF GOD

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Adoption names a gift of the Father's love and a new identity that shapes hope, obedience, and love for the family of God.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The letter moves from assurance received to family resemblance expressed in truthful and practical love.

1 John 3:1–3

WATER, BLOOD, AND SPIRIT

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The threefold testimony directs attention to the public mission, sacrificial death, and Spirit-confirmed identity of Jesus.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

God's testimony centers assurance not in private feeling but in the Son who gives life.

1 John 5:6–12

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

ICEBREAKER

When you hear the word “assurance,” what kinds of experiences make confidence in God easier or harder for you?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

OBSERVATION

Read 1 John 1:5–10. What claims about sin does John correct, and what does he promise to people who confess?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

OBSERVATION

Read 1 John 3:16–18. How does John define love, and what contrast does he draw between speech and action?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

INTERPRETATION

Why does John connect truthful confession about Jesus with discernment of spiritual teaching in 1 John 4:1–6?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTERPRETATION

How do faith, love, obedience, and assurance work together in 1 John without becoming a formula for earning God's love?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

APPLICATION

What is one area where you need to step into the light through truthful confession or honest conversation this week?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

APPLICATION

Who has a practical need you can meet with time, attention, resources, or encouragement rather than words alone?

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

PRAYER PROMPT

Thank God for giving eternal life in his Son. Ask for courage to remain in truth, receive his love, and make that love visible this week.

Leader's Note: Invite concrete observation before moving to response.

KEY CHARACTERS & PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Jesus Christ

The eternal Word of life who came in the flesh, gives eternal life, and reveals the Father's love.

The Father

The God who is light and love, who names believers his children and gives assurance through his Son.

Believers

A community called to remain in truth, confess sin, love in deed, and discern teaching about Jesus.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION — LIVING IT OUT TODAY

- Bring one hidden failure or fear into God's light through honest confession and receive forgiveness rather than managing appearances.
- Choose one concrete act of love that meets a real need instead of offering only warm intentions.
- Measure spiritual teaching by whether it honors the biblical Jesus—fully God, truly human, crucified and risen.

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"We love because he first loved us."