



DAILY BIBLE READING

# JOY IN JOHN'S LETTERS

*Tim Blagg*

Read. Ask. Live. Love

# Daily Bible Reading

## What?

Sometimes we find it hard to read the Bible, don't we? At church we hear it all the time: "*read the Bible more.*" But how? Some of the devotionals on offer seem to have less Bible than story. Some of the Bible reading plans seem too big to take on all at once; what should I think about? How can I possibly know what questions to ask as I read through God's word?

It's in light of these questions that these daily bible readings have come into existence! The aim is to help you read God's word for yourself and ask some of the questions to comprehend what God is saying to you today through his living and active word, with the hope asking these sorts of questions for yourself as you read through the Bible in bigger doses that this has to offer. It's a tool, and hence it's only as valuable as our use of it.

My prayer for you as you use these - whether by yourself or with your family around the dinner table - is that God will work through his word to grow you into the fullness of Christ and bring you joy as you come to know him through his word.

## How?

The way to approach it every day (as recommended) is:

- 1) Pray to God; it is his word we're reading, so ask him to help you understand it.
- 2) Read the passage once or twice.
- 3) ASK: Go through each question, looking back at the bible to think through them.
- 4) Pray about what you have learned; ASK God's help, LIVE out the applications for today and in it all, LOVE God even more.

## Want more?

If you want more studies like these ones, check out our online database at [www.trinitycity.church/youth](http://www.trinitycity.church/youth) - just follow the links. Alternatively, if you're looking for more in depth bible reading plans, many can be found in study bibles or online. Chat to your bible study group leader or pastor for more information.

In Christ,

Tim

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*A special thanks to Simon Marshman for his contribution to Week 6*

## **WEEK 1 - 1 John 1:1-4; 5:13 and John's Gospel (various)**

### **Day 1**

- Read 1 John 5:13

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who does John say he has written this letter to?
2. Why does John say he has written this letter?
3. This is a little different from why John wrote his Gospel account of Jesus' life. Check out John 20:30-31. Did you notice any differences or similarities between the two?

- Joy for Today:

- It's a bit strange to start at the end of the letter, isn't it?! To kick us off, it's a good idea to find out why this letter was written. What was John hoping for? When John wrote his Gospel, he wanted to pass on the true message about Jesus to readers and invite them to come in and believe in him, and so by believing they might have eternal life. When John wrote 1 John, though, he was writing to a church under fire. Christians who had believed in Jesus already, but were unsure about it because of false teachers around them. They were unsure and unconfident. So for today, put yourself in the shoes of a Christian who is feeling very insecure about their faith. How would John's words leave you feeling? Thank God for the letter of 1 John for providing joy and assurance to Christians, both in the 1st Century AD and today! Pray as we start this journey that God will grow you in your assurance of the truth of Jesus.

### **Day 2**

- Read 1 John 1:1-4

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that "jump out" at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 4 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. This intro doesn't read like a normal letter. But it is very similar to what John writes in his Gospel! Read John 1:1-18. What similarities can you see between the two?

- Joy for Today:

- John was one of Jesus' earliest followers - one of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus. He was with Jesus from the start of Jesus' public ministry through till Jesus ascended into heaven. He was better qualified than many people to talk about the real Jesus. This is especially important because the identity of Jesus was under

attack from false teachers in John's day, from sects of teaching called *gnosticism*. These guys will come up again and again as we go through 1 John! For today, though, take some time to thank God that we can have confidence we know the real Jesus because of eyewitnesses like John. We can have true joy in relationship with the real Jesus.

### **Day 3**

- Read 1 John 1:1

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who or what is the Word of Life?
2. How does John describe this Word of Life? How did he and the other apostles interact with the Word of Life?
3. John also talks about the Word of Life in his Gospel account. Check out what the following passages say about the Word of Life: John 1:1-4, 14; 6:68-69.

- Joy for Today:

- We have a historical faith. That might sound a little strange, but it's such a good thing. Atheists like Richard Dawkins, as well as Islamic teaching, Jewish teaching and even certain parts of Christian teaching try to claim that the Jesus we believe in didn't really exist; that Christians have got him all wrong. But John doesn't want to leave any doubt in the minds of Christians: he met, saw, heard and touched the legit living, breathing Jesus - the same Jesus he writes about! This is the Jesus we believing in and trust in - the real Jesus of history. Thank God for this confidence we can have.

### **Day 4**

- Read 1 John 1:2

- Think through the following questions:

1. What do John and the other apostles proclaim to Christians?
2. Where was the Word of Life before appearing to John and others?
3. John isn't just speaking out on his own accord. He records Jesus talking about what true eternal life is. What has Jesus said is eternal life? Read John 6:26-27, 38-40, 45-51; 10:25-30; 17:1-5.

- Joy for Today:

- In John's Gospel (John 10:10), Jesus claims that he has come that his followers may have life to the full. Life abundantly. Not just the promise of life after death - as good as it is! The promise of eternal life starting here and now. Life that starts the moment we accept Jesus as our saviour. Eternal life; us living the way God always wanted us to, by his help. There's plenty more to say on this, but for today:

God doesn't hold back; he sent his only son, Jesus, to bring us life by dying for us and rising again. Right now, you have life to the full if you trust Jesus, no matter how rough life feels or how great it feels. Grow in your joy; memorise John 10:10 - *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* Write it down on a card or make it your phone's wallpaper. Write it on the fridge or print it out and stick it up on the back of your toilet door.

## **Day 5**

- Read 1 John 1:3

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why did John and the other apostles proclaim the truth of what they witnessed to Christians? What was their purpose?
2. Who does John say true Christians have fellowship with?
3. Read John 1:11-13; 14:15-21; 17:20-26. What kind of fellowship does Jesus offer?

- Joy for Today:

- Fellowship versus friendship. Jesus certainly invites us into friendship with him (John 15:15), but that's the smallest part of what he offers us. Friendship is something that is subjective - we need to work on friendships and they are limited by how far apart we are from our friends. But the fellowship Jesus offers adds an extra dimension: family. Fellowship as brothers and sisters in Jesus. Unity with the true Jesus. Unity with one another because of that. True, we still need to work on these relationships with one another. But this fellowship lasts into eternity with God. You have fellowship with your Christian brothers and sisters forever. How do we have this fellowship? By accepting the truth of Jesus and believing in him. Take some time today and pray for the people you have fellowship with - thank God for them!

## **Day 6**

- Read 1 John 1:4

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why does John say they're writing this letter?
2. What do you think this means?
3. It's a weird phrase! But John is passing on the same words Jesus said once again! Check out John 15:9-17; 17:13-19. What similarities can you see between what John has written and what Jesus said?

- Joy for Today:

- This daily devotional series "Joy in 1 John," gets its title from this verse! "We write this to make our joy complete." Joy is a bit of an abstract concept. What makes Christian joy unique is that it isn't dependent on external circumstances necessarily; it is dependent on our relationship with God through Jesus. This means that even when you are sad, you can still be joyful. But what could be incomplete about this joy? Why might John and his fellow writers have an unfulfilled joy? It comes down to the fellowship that we thought about yesterday. Their joy is only complete if they can have confidence that other Christians around them remain in the true gospel - if Christians around them are in fellowship with them in the truth of Jesus. What about you? What would it look like for you to find your joy fully if both you and others at Church and your school Christian group were walking in the truth?

### **Day 7**

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 2 - 1 John 1:5-2:17**

### **Day 8**

- Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

- Think through the following questions:

1. What is the message that John says they heard from the Word of Life and declare to the readers?
2. What are the consequences of *not* acknowledging our sin?
3. What does Jesus' blood do for us if we walk in the light and confess our sins?
4. One day when you're sharing the good news about Jesus with a friend, De Nyall, and you get to the part about judgement day, De says "I don't want to really think about it that much. God is a nice and loving God; it's his job to forgive me so I'm sure I'll be fine in the end." How would you respond to De?

- Joy for Today:

- We need to take sin - our rebellion against God - very seriously. On a more serious note, do you need to confess anything to God and ask his forgiveness today? Sin holds us back from the fullness of joy in our salvation. Take the time today to confess to God sin in your life. Ask him to forgive you and to bring you into right relationship with him by the atoning blood of Jesus (1 John 2:2).

### **Day 9**

- Read 1 John 2:3-6

- Think through the following questions:

1. How do Christians know that they know the real Jesus?
2. What kind of person does John say is a liar?
3. According to v6, how do we do what God commands?

- Joy for Today:

- The relationship between faith and works is one of the most important ones to get right in the Christian life. Some people have sadly believed that we are saved by God based on the works we do in our lives or the special knowledge we have (some world religions are based on this concept!). Others have believed that we are saved through faith in Jesus plus what we do; that faith in Jesus is a good start, but we need more to truly be saved (Roman Catholicism usually falls into this category). But the gospel doesn't say either of these things. True Christians are saved 100% by faith in Jesus to eternal life. We have true joy. Out of this joy and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we keep God's commands. Faith which saves leads to works. And for Christians, the entirety of our works are summed up as living as Jesus lived. Write out a list: how did Jesus live? How did he treat God? How did he treat other people? Who would Jesus have sat with at lunch?

How would Jesus think about going to youth or Church or the school Christian group? As you try to live like Jesus lived, ask God for his help.

## **Day 10**

- Read 1 John 2:7-8

- Think through the following questions:

1. John mentions that he's not writing a new command but an old one. Check out John 13:34-35. How does this compare to what Jesus said?
2. Look at Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. What makes this command in 1 John an old command?
3. How is what John is writing (and what Jesus says) a new command? What has changed between the instructions in the Old Testament and what Jesus and John are saying here?

- Joy for Today:

- As John has already said in 1 John 1:5, God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. The true light is the truth of Jesus being God's way of relating with the world. It's this light that causes darkness to flee, and will do so until Jesus returns and all that is in the world is true knowledge of him. The darkness is passing away. All opposition to God, all sin, all wrongdoing, all injustice and inequality - it's passing away. When Jesus returns, there will no longer be darkness, only true light. True worship of God. True obedience. True love. Check out Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27. How good is that? If you're the artistic type, try drawing a picture or writing a poem or song that helps you look forward to this. Thank God for the darkness passing away and the true light coming.

## **Day 11**

- Read 1 John 2:9-11

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who is still in darkness?
2. Who lives in the light?
3. What do you think it means that "They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them?"

- Joy for Today:

- John hinted at it in yesterday's passage, talking about the old yet new command (he'll fully describe this in 1 John 3:11-4:21). But here he gives us a foretaste of what this command is: love one another. Not a mushy, romance-y love with butterflies in the tummy and sweet little blue birds chirping. A committed, persistent choice to love in action, even when we don't feel like it. And a love for others, not



because of how nice or good they are, but because Jesus loves them and died for them. Let's get real about this today: who's that person you secretly hope you won't get bogged down with at youth or Church? A person (or people) who you really don't want to talk with, or feel uncomfortable with. You might even secretly pray that you are on the opposite side of heaven to them! God wants you to love that person. This doesn't mean you have to become the best of friends overnight! But it means you need to love them. So put the rubber to the road: go and talk with them next time you see them. Ask them what being a Christian means to them. Live it out.

## Day 12

- Read 1 John 2:12-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does John write to the "dear/little children?" (John uses this phrase - little children or dear children - to refer to all Christians in the Church)
2. What does John write to the "fathers?" (John is probably addressing those who are mature in the faith)
3. What does John write to the "young men?" (John is probably addressing those less mature in the faith, although it's also true for the mature in the faith)

- Joy for Today:

- As we've already looked at, John was writing to Christians who may have felt uncertain about the truth of their faith. *Have we got it all wrong? Have we made a mistake? Is Jesus legit?* How wonderful it must have been for them to read these words from John! Each word of reassurance is countering the false claims of false teachers. This is one of the great things that God's word does for us: through his word, God protects us from believing lies about him. We have the truth. Take a moment to read through this poem again slowly. How does it leave you feeling? Talk to God about it.

## Day 13

- Read 1 John 2:15-17

- Think through the following questions:

1. What do you think it means to "love the world or anything in the world?"
2. The word "lust" also means desire, greed or craving; it's a negative word in v16. What do you think the desires of the eye and the desires of the flesh are? What do you think the pride of life means?
3. Look back at v8. What similarities do you notice between it and v17? What's passing away? What is remaining?

- Joy for Today:

- Why do you reckon following the world (not talking geographically, but spiritually - the world is code for sin-bound human nature) is tempting? The truth is that the world *is* tempting - if we deny that we're either super spiritual, or we're lying. Sin makes big promises and offers us stuff we want at the cost of treating God as he deserves. The only way we can say no to the temptations of the world is to be more focused on God and what he offers, because what God offers is better! A great example of this is in Luke 4:1-13, where Jesus was tempted by the devil. Everything the devil offered Jesus was good - nothing he offered was bad! So, why did Jesus reject the devil? Why should we reject the promises that sin makes? How does God offer more? Spend time thinking about this with any one area of temptation you can think of in your life right now. Bring it before God today.

## Day 14

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 3 - 1 John 2:18-3:10**

### **Day 15**

- Read 1 John 2:18-19

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does “antichrist” mean? (Check out v22 and 2 John 7)
2. According to John, how do we know it’s the last hour?
3. Where did these antichrists start out? Were they ever really Christians?

- Joy for Today:

- One of the tricky things about following Jesus is that over time we might (probably will) see people leave Church. Not just to move from one church to another, but actually leave the church. Sometimes they even become hostile to Christianity. This can be really heartbreaking and painful. Imagine if one of your small group leaders left church, only to come back and say that Christianity has actually got it all wrong and there’s so much more we need to know to be saved. It could be quite confronting! What John is saying is that these “Christians” who left the Church and are now saying lies like “*Jesus isn’t really God*,” were never really Christians. Why? Because true Christians will persevere; real Christians stay Christian. This might raise questions for you, but this is a great encouragement for Christians. Want to stay a Christian? Keep pursuing Jesus and reading the Bible! How do I know if I’ll last? Keep pursuing Jesus and reading the Bible! How can I help my fellow Christians to grow and stay Christian? Encourage them to keep pursuing Jesus and reading the Bible! And when it comes to those who seem to have abandoned Christianity, pray for them. We don’t know if they might change before they die; only God knows. Write out an encouragement letter/text/email today for another Christian in your small group, encouraging them to continue in the faith, even if it’s hard.

### **Day 16**

- Read 1 John 2:20-23

- Think through the following questions:

1. Unlike these false teachers, what do true Christians have? (v20)
2. What does John reassure Christians of?
3. Why are these false teachers called antichrists?

- Joy for Today:

- “Jesus is the Christ.” For some people today, Jesus is “Mr. Christ” - Christ becomes a surname. But the reality is that Christ is a title, like “Doctor” or “Mayor.” “Christ” is the same as “Messiah,” which means God’s anointed one. And in the case of Jesus, it is even more significant: it means God’s long promised anointed

King in the line of David. He is God's unique Son. These false teachers denied this: they claimed one way or another that Jesus wasn't really God's Son *and* the human king. That's not what the Bible says. Jesus is a true human - Hebrews 2:14-18 - and therefore he understands what it's like to face temptation. Isn't that great? Jesus is truly God - John 20:28-29 - and therefore he is worthy of our worship, and he can deliver on his promises. Thank God for the truth which we can be sure of.

## **Day 17**

- Read 1 John 2:24-27

- Think through the following questions:

1. How can Christians remain in the Son and in the Father?
2. What has God promised to Christians - to those who remain in the Son and the Father?
3. The false teachers were claiming that they had a special anointing and had secret knowledge which these Christians needed to really know God. How does John oppose these false teachers? Why can Christians be certain? (Read from vv20-23 as well to get the bigger picture).

- Joy for Today:

- Can you tell the difference between a fake and the real deal? Sometimes we find it easy - like when our coffee is burnt or when Coke has changed the recipe - but other times it isn't so easy. When it comes to Christianity, the best way to spot a fake is to know the real deal so well, anything slightly different is clearly wrong. That's why John says that we should remain in Jesus just as he taught us through the Holy Spirit - what we heard. In other words, the best protection against false teaching is to know the truth so well that we can detect when something isn't right. Thank God that he has told us everything we need to know to have eternal life and to be safe in the truth! What does it look like for you to better learn God's truth so you can detect false teaching?

## **Day 18**

- Read 1 John 2:28-29

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does John call for Christians (dear children) to do given that Jesus is coming again?
2. Why does he instruct Christians to do this?
3. How do we know if someone is born of Jesus?

- Joy for Today:

- The New Testament is filled with reminders that Jesus is coming back really soon. We can probably relate to Jesus' disciples when they asked him when he was going to establish his kingdom (Acts 1:6), but the fact is that God hasn't told us when Jesus will come back. All we've been told is to live ready for when Jesus comes back. Jesus' return isn't something for us to be afraid of or nervous about; it's going to be fantastic and a time of great rejoicing for Christians! The day Jesus comes back will be better than the best day we can imagine right now. The question John is posing to us is are we ready for that day? Are we living as people who belong to that day, or as people who belong to this world? Put another way, if Jesus came back before this sentence finished, would you be ready? If not, why not? Praise God that he is coming soon! Let's live up to it.

## **Day 19**

- Read 1 John 3:1-3

- Think through the following questions:

1. What proof does John give us of God the Father's great love for us?
2. What will happen to children of God when Jesus returns?
3. How do Christians who have this hope live? Why?

- Joy for Today:

- "A chip off the old block." "The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree." "You're your father's son/mother's daughter." Maybe you're familiar with phrases like these - talking about family resemblance. The promise of 1 John though is that we are God's children. This means that we resemble God a bit, and when Jesus returns, we will be like Jesus; we will be just like Jesus is in resembling the family. This is our hope. This is the destiny of all Christians - to look just like Jesus! Looking like Jesus doesn't mean growing beards and wearing robes; as John writes in v3, it's about being pure, as he is pure. This is what we will be when Jesus comes back. Isn't that great? Part of the Christian life here and now is striving to be pure, but when Jesus comes back we will be there! We will be pure; no more effort or striving will be needed, because it will come naturally. Praise God for this wonderful hope we have today.

## **Day 20**

- Read 1 John 3:4-10

- Think through the following questions:

1. Yesterday we saw the positive - true children of Jesus purify themselves, and will be pure when Jesus returns. What do we see that true children of Jesus don't continue to do/make a practice of?

2. What is one of the reasons that Jesus appeared?
3. How do we distinguish between true children of God and the children of the devil?

- Joy for Today:

- These verses might appear scary to some Christians - no one who lives in him keeps on sinning (v6). You might ask, *"But I still struggle with this sin...Does that mean I'm not a real Christian?"* This is a real question to ask. In fact, if there is a sin which you haven't given up, you might need to seriously ask yourself, *"Do I love this sin enough to go to hell for it?"* We should never get comfortable with sin remaining in our lives. But John isn't writing to unsettle Christians; he is writing to reassure them! Back in 1 John 1:8-2:2, we saw John say *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness...if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One..."* John hasn't just forgotten these words. There is hope and assurance in them. If we are serious about wanting to follow Jesus, then until he comes we will never be completely free from sin. We will still sin; if we claimed otherwise we'd be deceiving ourselves! Instead, over time Christians should be working to put sin to death and pursue Jesus. So right now, take heart. Be encouraged. And take serious steps to put any sin in your life to death. Maybe the next step is to share it with a friend or family member or someone at church. Or maybe the next step is to confess it to God. Maybe it means deleting stuff from your phone or computer. Take the next step, and know that God forgives us because of Jesus' blood. Don't compromise the joy of our salvation for the sake of sin which leads to death.

## Day 21

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## WEEK 4 - 1 John 3:11-24

### Day 22

- Read 1 John 3:11-24

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 14 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. How does John define love in these verses?

- Joy for Today:

- “I know God loves me because...” How would you finish that sentence? A great kid’s song goes “*Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...*” That’s a great starting point! But the Bible is even more specific. We hear John proclaim it: we know what love is because Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. Similarly, in Romans 5:8 Paul writes: “...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” You might have many ways to answer how you know God loves you. But one reason will never change: when you were a sinner, Jesus Christ died so that you could have life to the full with God forever, being purified from all sin. We’ve already memorised John 10:10 (did you remember it?). Why not add to that list 1 John 3:16? “*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*” (If you’re keen, memorise Romans 5:8 as well). Soak in this verse; we can know the ultimate love!

### Day 23

- Read 1 John 3:11-15 (a)

- Think through the following questions:

1. What is the message which John’s readers heard from the beginning?
2. Who does John say we shouldn’t be like?
3. Why shouldn’t Christians be surprised if the world hates us?

- Joy for Today:

- The world doesn’t get Christians. Back in 1 John 3:7-10, John talked about true children of God and the children of the devil. And here, John has talked about one of the devil’s children: Cain. v12 brings it out clearly: Cain’s actions were evil and his brother’s - Abel’s actions - were righteous (you can read more in Genesis 4). The reason the world doesn’t get Christians is because Satan/the devil doesn’t get Christians. Satan’s fundamental beliefs are that God *doesn’t* deserve worship and that God *isn’t* good. And anyone who shares these views is a child of the devil. Of

course the world doesn't understand Christians; we *know* that God is good and we *know* that God deserves worship! Whilst we might be able to get along with people quite well and share life together - a great thing to do! - there will always be some level which the world doesn't *get* us as Christians. Don't be surprised. We will *never* fit in properly here on earth. We belong to God. Have you made peace with this truth? Pray about it to God now - ask him to help you be prepared for rejection and not fitting in perfectly with everyone around us. Ask God to use you to help others come to love God and worship him, because he does deserve it!

## **Day 24**

- Read 1 John 3:11-15 (b)

- Think through the following questions:

1. According to John, how do we know that we have passed from death to life?
2. Who remains in death?
3. John says that anyone hates a brother or sister is a murderer. These are pretty strong words! But John is just repeating what Jesus has already said. Check out Matthew 5:21-22. What similarities do you notice between John's words here and Jesus' words in Matthew?

- Joy for Today:

- Jesus (and John) bring up something important: it's not just our actions (e.g. murder) that matter, but our heart attitudes to others (e.g. hate). God doesn't just want our actions to be right, but our hearts. He wants us to love our brothers and sisters - to love other Christians. Jesus even said that the world will know that we are his followers by our love for one another (John 13:34-35). So a quick pulse-check question: if someone were to record and upload to Youtube your relationships with other Christians, would they be able to know you were Jesus' disciples if mute was on? We love one another with our words - that's really important - but would they be able to know based on how you treated one another that there was something different about you, even if without words they couldn't work out what role Jesus played in that? Is there anything that you could change to demonstrate love towards *all* other Christians that you encounter throughout the week to show love? Reflect on this. You may find that you need to bring some of this stuff up with God in prayer. Ask him to help you change. Maybe talk about it with other Christians in your small group or at school - what would it look like for your relationships to show your discipleship in front of a watching world?

## **Day 25**

- Read 1 John 3:16-18



- Think through the following questions:

1. How do we know what love is? (Did you remember the memory verse?)
2. How does Jesus laying down his life for us influence the way Christians live?
3. Practically, what does it mean to love our brothers and sisters if we have material possessions and they don't?

- Joy for Today:

- In 1 John 3:16-18, John explains one very practical way in which Christians are called to love one another: in material needs. This isn't the first time this command has been given to God's people! Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11. A bit of context: this passage is talking about the Sabbath Year (every seventh year), when God's people were meant to forgive any debts others had to them, with the purpose of releasing one another from poverty – even at personal cost. How are God's people Israel called to act towards their poor brothers and sisters? So - rubber hits the road - what might it look like for you to love brothers and sisters in need in your context? Loving your brothers and sisters probably involves some level of cost for you - maybe socially, maybe financially, maybe academically. Are you ready to pay that cost to show the same love that God showed you - even if it means not getting to study or sleep in on a Sunday morning so you can go to Westcare? Or not getting to eat out at Maccas so you can chip in towards an Operation Christmas Child box? Or inviting a socially awkward Christian friend to hang out with you at school during lunch? What does it mean for you to love with actions and in truth this week?

## **Day 26**

- Read 1 John 3:17-22 (Why not read the ESV today? A great way to grow in understanding the Bible is through reading two translations side by side from time to time. If you notice any differences between the two, do they change the meaning at all?)

- Think through the following questions:

1. Looking at vv18-19, how do we know we belong to the truth?
2. Thinking about the need to share with a brother or sister in need (v17), how might our hearts "condemn" us? (Look again at Deuteronomy 15:7-11 like we did yesterday - how did the Israelite's heart condemn them in that passage?)
3. Why do we have confidence before God if our hearts don't condemn us? (Hint: look back at v18-19).

- Joy for Today:

- This is a tricky passage - well done for working through it! You might need to go back over 1 John 3:11-24 and Deuteronomy 15:7-11 a few times to see all the

links between them. What John is making clear is that how we treat our fellow Christians matters greatly to God, especially if we are well-off and they are impoverished. For the Israelite in their Israel, they may have been tempted not to share with those worse off because it would cost them without any hope of getting “returns” on their investment. How many times have we thought “someone else can help that person out” when we’ve avoided hanging out with another Christian who is socially worse off than us, or when a fellow Christian has been unwell or in hospital or just doing it tough? What God longs for his children to do is to love one another in actions *because* we are family. Because he gave his life for us. So, what would it look like for you to love other Christians in action this week? Is there someone who you could show practical love to at home, or work, or school, or church? Ask God for his help to love others in deed and in truth, and that you will take joy in doing this.

## Day 27

- Read 1 John 3:21-24

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why do Christians receive from God anything we ask from him? Does this mean God gives us everything we ask for? Why, or why not?
2. What is God’s command?
3. How do we know that God lives in us?

- Joy for Today:

- We can have confidence in praying to God because we are his children. We’re going to think more about this in 1 John 5, but for now, it’s quite clear in this passage: as God’s legitimate children through Jesus, we have confidence that he will provide us with all we need. As God’s legit children, we ask him for stuff that pleases him, not for stuff that dishonours him - stuff we’ve looked at throughout 1 John already! You are God’s child. Read through Luke 11:9-13, and thank God for the confidence he gives us when we come before him in prayer.

## Day 28

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 5 - 1 John 4**

### **Day 29**

- Read 1 John 4:1-3

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why should Christians test the spirits?
2. How can we recognise the true spirit of God?
3. What does a spirit of antichrist claim about Jesus?

- Joy for Today:

- Chances are John wasn't warning Christians about disembodied spirits floating around and trying to deceive people in the world. Instead, these spirits of antichrist are the ones at work through the false prophets who have gone out into the world (v1). God calls for Christians to listen very carefully to the message that we hear from teachers and weigh it up against what the Bible says. A very simple and practical way to do this is to read the Bible passage that is being preached on at Church or in a sermon. When you read a book or watch a video or even read a Christian article on a website, *test it*. Does it stack up? Does it uphold the truth of Jesus? Don't settle for anything less than the true Jesus of the gospel - Jesus Christ who came in the flesh from God and died for the sins of the world as an atoning sacrifice and was raised again to life.

### **Day 30**

- Read 1 John 4:4-6

- Think through the following questions:

1. How have Christians overcome the spirits of the antichrist - these false prophets?
2. Why does the world listen to them?
3. Why don't people from the world listen to the Christian teachers?

- Joy for Today:

- What voices do you find yourself wanting to listen to? What influences or teachers do you really like to hear? According to John, a way to test whether a Christian leader is true or false is to take a peek at their audience. Does their audience live in friendship with the world - giving Jesus a back seat and acting as if other stuff is more important? Maybe they spend more time talking about how God wants people to be rich or famous or have popularity. Maybe they talk about how Christians should really support same sex marriage because the Bible should be understood in the culture it's in, not in its original context. Stuff that sounds really good to the world, but flies in the face of the true gospel of Jesus. Be careful of people who teach like this. This is how we recognise the Spirit of truth. Ask God to

continually fill you with joy as you hear the true gospel of Jesus opened and explained - whether at Church or at small group.

### Day 31

- Read 1 John 4:7-12

- Think through the following questions:

1. How many times do you see the word "love" in these six verses?
2. What does love show about who we think God is?
3. How are Christians motivated to love one another?

- Joy for Today:

- We've looked at a couple of big verses which are wonderful for us to remember so far in this series. How are you going at remembering them? John 10:10, 1 John 3:16 (and Romans 5:8 if you were keen!). 1 John 4:10 is another one which is great to add and to remember and mull over. How do we know what love is? How do we define love? What is the great source of joy in the Christian life? Grasping this truth. *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* Memorise this verse today. Come back to it seven times before you go to bed. And at the end of the day, thank God for his love for us, telling him honestly what it means to you.

### Day 32

- Read 1 John 4:13-16

- Think through the following questions:

1. Look back at 1 John 3:24. Are there any similarities between that and these verses here?
2. What did John and the other apostles see, and therefore testify to the world?
3. What happens to those who acknowledge (or confess and live in light of the truth) that Jesus is the Son of God?

- Joy for Today:

- You might have heard the phrase *"let's draw near to God"* or *"God's presence is here as we worship."* While there's something to be said for us approaching God and deliberately remembering what he has done for us and declaring it in Christian fellowship, the amazing news of the gospel is that God is with us. If *anyone* acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. If you are a Christian - if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God - then through his Holy Spirit he is with you always. How good is that? Thank God for his loving constant presence. Check out Matthew 28:20 to remind yourself of this promise today.

### **Day 33**

- Read 1 John 4:16-18

- Think through the following questions:

1. God is love. Does this statement work if you reverse it - "love is God?" Why, or why not?
2. What does it mean for us to be like Jesus today based on what John's just been talking about?
3. Why does perfect love cast out fear?

- Joy for Today:

- John isn't saying that if we believe in Jesus and have love, we will never be afraid of anything ever again. That's not the way it quite works - you might still be afraid of heights or spiders or clowns. The kind of fear John is thinking of is a fear of judgement and punishment from God. v17 reminded us that we have confidence for the day of judgement if we are Christians. We don't need to fear the coming judgement because God's love has perfectly provided for us. Christians don't need to be afraid of the judgement because we know God and know his love was enough to save us. Fellow Christian, we don't need to fear judgement because God's perfect love removes all fear. Thank God for this joy he gives.

### **Day 34**

- Read 1 John 4:19-21

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why do Christians love?
2. Can someone who loves God hate another Christian? Why, or why not?
3. What command has God given us?

- Joy for Today:

- Our motivation for doing stuff matters to God. It's been an ongoing theme throughout 1 John. v19 is the heart of it: we love because God first loved us. We didn't choose God, but he chose us. That's why we can have no fear; God chose to love us when we were unlovable. He chose to love you when you wanted nothing to do with him. Isn't that wonderful? Take time out to reflect on this, thanking God for his love.

### **Day 35**

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 6 - 1 John 5**

### **Day 36**

- Read 1 John 5:1-5

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who is a child of God?
2. Who does a child of God love?
3. How do we overcome the world?

- Joy for Today:

- What's it mean to you to be a part of God's family? John says it is all about love - loving our father and loving our brothers and sisters. But we need to learn how to love. We get pretty mixed up about what love looks like, and so God gives us his commandments so that we learn how to live out love. He's shown us what love looks like (can you recall where we have seen that in 1 John?) and so he teaches us how to live it out. So we realise that his commands aren't a burden to weigh us down but a freedom to truly love. Obeying God isn't about being strong enough to win the battle with sin on our own, it is about trusting that he has already won the battle and has freed us to love - and then he teaches us how to love. How good is that!

### **Day 37**

- Read 1 John 5:6-11

- Think through the following questions:

1. The reference to 'water and blood' probably refers to Jesus' baptism and his death. How did these demonstrate Jesus identity (Check out John 1:31-34 and compare this with Mark 1:9-11. Then check out 1 John 1:7 alongside John 17:1-5)
2. How does God testify to Jesus' identity?
3. Why should we take God's testimony seriously?

- Joy for Today:

- Do you sometimes feel like your confidence in Jesus is just based on inner feelings? John reminds us here that we can have confidence because of the historical evidence of his awesome power and sacrificial death. Do you sometimes feel like your confidence in Jesus is just based on head knowledge? John reminds us here that we can have confidence because of the work of the Spirit in helping us recognise Jesus for who he is. Objective fact, subjective experience of the Holy Spirit bringing us to faith. God is good!

## **Day 38**

- Read 1 John 5:12-15

- Think through the following questions:

1. According to John, who has life?
2. What two things does John want Christians to be confident of?
3. When can we be confident that God will say yes to our prayers?

- Joy for Today:

- We get caught up in working out whether prayer changes God's mind, but here John is helping us to see the joy of knowing that God changes our minds to pray in keeping with his mind. This gets pretty close to what eternal life is all about. Being made like Jesus. Having our hard hearts brought to life by the Holy Spirit so that they beat in time with his. Living without the shackles of sin and the desire to rebel against our loving Heavenly Father. That starts the moment we put our trust in Jesus, and continues beyond the grave into life with him forever. So, as you pray today, ask God to give you the confidence that has given you eternal life. Ask him to make your heart more like Jesus. Ask him to shape your priorities to match his. This is his will for your life. You can be confident he will do it!

## **Day 39**

- Read 1 John 5:16-17

- Think through the following questions:

1. What should we do when we see someone sinning?
2. What does Romans 6:23 say is the consequence of sin?
3. What does 1 John 5:11-12 say about where life and death are found?

- Joy for Today:

- This is a tough passage! Trust John to give us a curve ball right near the end. But remember that one of his biggest concerns has been to protect his people from the deceitfulness of false teachers who deny the plain teaching that Jesus is the Son of God. Not just once, but over and over and over with a hardness of heart that refuses to believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit. All sin leads to death, but God's grace is sufficient for the salvation of all, for the forgiveness of all. But that grace only comes through faith in his Son. Wilfully turn yourself against the testimony of the Holy Spirit about the Son of God and you risk a path from which there is no return. But that's really the side note here - the great encouragement is to pray for one another that we might keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, not losing heart, pursuing obedience in love. Pray for your brothers and sisters today!



## Day 40

- Read 1 John 5:18-20

- Think through the following questions:

1. What three big ideas does John say we know?
2. What different titles does John use to describe Jesus in these verses?
3. We're coming to the end of John's first letter, and he is wrapping it all up here. Have you seen any of these three big ideas talked about anywhere else in 1 John? Where?

- Joy for Today:

- "We are in him who is true." John has found so many different ways to say this same message to Christians who would have been feeling very unsettled and shaken by the false teachers coming into their midst. Maybe you've even felt concerned that you've got it wrong when it comes to God. John's constant words of assurance to us are that when you get Jesus, you have the truth. Take some time today to write yourself a letter reminding you that when you get Jesus right, you have the truth.

## Day 41

- Read 1 John 5:21

- Think through the following questions:

1. How does John address the Christians in this last verse? Has he used this phrase any other times?
2. What command does John give to the Christians?
3. Think back over the last few weeks. Has there been anything from 1 John that has jumped out at you or challenged you?

- Joy for Today:

- Having been reminded of the glorious truth that we are in God and will not continue sinning, John makes one final appeal to Christians in v21; "keep yourselves from idols." In the broadest sense, an idol is anything that takes the place of worship that the true God – Jesus Christ (v20) – alone deserves. There are a few tools to figure out what might be an idol or a potential idol. Make a list of the things in your life. Good things, such as family, grades, employment, responsibility, food and entertainment. If any of these was taken from you, would it leave you angry or really sad, so much so that you felt you couldn't talk to God anymore? Do any of these things take up your daydreams and your money and the biggest and best part of your time? If you had to give up any of these things for the sake of honouring God, would you be happy to, or would it leave you grumbling? The only way for us to respond to idols in our own lives is to confess

them before God, and to be captivated by his beauty more than we are by the idol itself. Take time now and confess to God these idols.

**Day 42**

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 7 - 2 John**

### **Day 43**

- Read 2 John

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 13 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. Having just finished reading through 1 John, do you notice any similarities between these two letters? Write them down.

- Joy for Today:

- Reading through all of John’s letters leaves us being crystal clear about one thing: John *loved* his audience. He loves them deeply and is very concerned for their ongoing perseverance in the Christian faith. This letter is pretty short - the equivalent of a postcard! - but it is both helpful and encouraging to the audience and to us today. Regardless of how old you are, or how much responsibility you have in your church, there is most certainly someone you can encourage in the faith. Today, write a letter, or card, or an email, or shoot a text off, to encourage a fellow Christian as they continue living a life to please Jesus. You might like to even use a couple of verses from 2 John as you write it to encourage them with scripture. And as you write it out, pray for them. Pray that God will grow them in their joy in relationship with him.

### **Day 44**

- Read 2 John 1-2

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who is writing this letter?
2. “The lady chosen by God and her children” sounds a bit cryptic! Check out Ephesians 5:25-27 and 2 Corinthians 11:2. Who is the “lady” being referred to? Who do you reckon her children are?
3. What is the truth that the author is talking about in v2?

- Joy for Today:

- “Chosen by God.” This is a phrase of huge comfort for God’s people! It can be a bit daunting for some Christians today who might wonder “How do I know if I’m chosen? How do I know if I am saved?” John writes this, not to cause Christians to panic, but instead to soothe anxiety and assure followers of the truth about Jesus that they are secured with God for eternity. If you believe in Jesus, you are chosen by God. You are his precious child through the work Jesus has done on the cross.

Read Romans 8:31-39 - this is the kind of God who has chosen us. Isn't that awesome? Give thanks to God; thank him for all he has given us and for the assurance that he has chosen you through Jesus.

## Day 45

- Read 2 John 3-4

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does John say will be with Christians in truth and in love?
2. How is Jesus described in v3?
3. Why does John have great joy?

- Joy for Today:

- Back in 1 John 1:4, we saw John claim that he was writing that first letter "...to make our joy complete." And what does he say here in 2 John? He has great joy! He is delighted because the church he is writing to is filled with Christians who are walking in the truth of the gospel and growing in maturity. This is fantastic news for John. A quick question for you today is this: is there someone who has invested time into sharing God's word with you? Someone who wants to see you grow and persevere as a Christian and prays for you? Maybe it's another Christian at church or school. Maybe it's a small group leader or your pastor. Maybe it's your parents. Today, why not let them know how God has grown you through their work? It could be even as small as saying "When we talked about 1 John last week, I was really encouraged by ... and have been trying to ... because of that." Share this process of growing through God's work together with one another - you and your fellow Christians will be greatly encouraged and share in one another's joy through what God is doing!

## Day 46

- Read 2 John 5-6

- Think through the following questions:

1. How does John address his audience?
2. What kind of command is he writing?
3. How does John define what love is in these verses?

- Joy for Today:

- How do you feel when you come across the word, "command?" It isn't a popular phrase in different parts of Christianity, with many people feeling uncomfortable with it. "Didn't Jesus die for us so we *wouldn't* have to deal with commandments from God? Isn't this just a return to law and missing out on the grace of Jesus?" What we're missing if we think this way is that these commands all come out of a

relationship with God! It's not "Do these things and I will save you." Instead, its "I have saved you. You are my children. I have loved you. So love me and love one another." Think back to our memory verses - particularly 1 John 3:16, Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:10. How has God loved us already? Is it a harsh law for God to ask us to love one another and him in response? God loves us so wonderfully. Today, why not sing along to a hymn or a song bringing praise to God for his love for us? "How Deep the Father's Love" could be a great one to remind you of these truths and thank God for his love all at the same time!

### **Day 47**

- Read 2 John 7-11

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why is John concerned with the command to love from verses 5-6?
2. What kind of person is John saying to look out for?
3. How does John say we should respond to people who ignore the truth of Jesus being the Christ?

- Joy for Today:

- Who we fellowship with says a lot about who we are. This is an important concept in the New Testament. You might have heard sayings like "A rotten apple spoils the barrel," or "Bad company corrupts good character." In this case, though, John is saying something even more. He's saying that if you are a Christian who knows the truth about Jesus, and you invite someone who claims to be a Christian but denies truths about Jesus into your house or your church, and give them a platform to speak up, you are endorsing them. You are saying "Everything this person says, I'm supporting!" We don't necessarily have wandering false Christians running around today. But think about the books you'd recommend to friends. Or the movies you'd go and see with them. Or even the youth groups or church events you'd invite your friends to. Are you ready to completely endorse them as representing the truth of who Jesus is? Just take some time today and think about areas where you could be supporting false Christian teachers without realising it. Is there anything you need to change? Talk about it with God.

### **Day 48**

- Read 2 John 12-13

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does John hope he can do instead of writing more letters?
2. Why does John want to do this?
3. Who sends greetings?

- Joy for Today:

- Once again, just like in 1 John 1:4, we have John expressing his desire: “so that our joy may be complete.” Back in v4 of 2 John, he claimed that he already has been filled with great joy to find some of the Christians were walking in the truth. This was what he was hoping from 1 John, wasn't it? And yet, as we see here in v12, his joy still isn't complete! He still wants to visit the church in person and continue to teach them and care for them face to face. This is a challenge to us too. John felt a “discontented joy” from the way Christians he wrote to responded by walking in the truth. Why? Because he wants even more Christians to walk in the truth! He wants to see more and more people knowing the true Jesus Christ and living their lives accordingly. His heart is to see true Christians established in their faith for the long term. What about you? Think about the Christians around you. How do they fill you with joy and rejoicing before God? Are there any Christians you know who are struggling, or not-yet-Christian friends who don't know God yet? Do you feel the same discontentment that John feels for them - a longing to see them come to know Christ in truth and live lives for him? Ask God to grow in you this discontented joy.

**Day 49**

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **WEEK 8 - 3 John**

### **Day 50**

- Read 3 John

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 14 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. You’ve now read both 1 and 2 John. Do you notice any similarities or differences between these letters and 3 John?

- Joy for Today:

- A quick contrast between 2 John and 3 John for today: back in 2 John, John warned very sternly against showing hospitality to false teachers (vv10-11). He made it clear - don’t associate with them, because association meant approval and endorsement! When we come to 3 John, however, we get a different picture. In v8, John claims that we ought to show hospitality to such people (talking about faithful Christians who went out to preach the truth of Jesus) so that we may work together for the truth. What John is saying is that not only do we endorse them and their message by showing hospitality, but we even partner with them in working for the truth! Partnership is so important; together, as the body of Jesus, Christians partner and work to ensure that the good news of Jesus is going out. What about us today? Maybe it means cooking for a different group at church so they can meet and read the Bible together without the distraction of preparing food. Maybe it means financially giving to a specific person who is involved in ministry. With so many missionaries coming for a three month home assignment, maybe your family could give up a car or a room for that time? And on the flipside, maybe it means sharing the good news of Jesus with your words to people who you spend time with, whether it means organising an event, or hosting a lunch-time Bible study, or inviting someone else to read the Bible with you one-to-one. There are so many areas! Choose just one to think about critically; how are you going with partnership in sharing the truth in this area? Is there anything you could do differently?

### **Day 51**

- Read 3 John 1-4

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who is writing this letter? Who is he writing it to?
2. What does the author pray for the reader?

### 3. What gives the author the greatest joy?

#### - Joy for Today:

- What response do you have when you hear about a Christian who was killed for their faith? A Christian who was asked, "Do you believe that Jesus is Lord?" and when they said yes was executed? Maybe you feel a sense of pride for them, along with a bit of a lingering question at the back of your mind. "Could I do that?" This is something that every Christian might face one day - don't doubt that. But what Jesus calls all Christians everywhere to do isn't just to die for him when the day may come. He calls for Christians to live for him *every day*. For as many years as he gives us, to *continue* to walk in the truth. To keep on keeping on in the truth of Jesus. To not panic or be unsettled if someone claims that Christians are missing out or have got it all wrong. Someone who lives their lives day in day out for Jesus. Today, if you can, talk to an older Christian. Someone who's been Christian for longer than you have. Ask them how they overcame challenges in following Jesus. Ask them how they have grown as a Christian. And give thanks for them - like John, you'll definitely be encouraged!

## Day 52

#### - Read 3 John 5-8

#### - Think through the following questions:

1. Gaius was showing hospitality to Christians. Did he know these Christians?
2. How much help did these Christians receive from pagans - Non-Christians?
3. Why does John say we should show hospitality to these Christians?

#### - Joy for Today:

- We all have some sort of income or money, whether it's from an allowance, or support, or a job. And the challenge that Christians seeking to honour God struggle with is how we honour God with the money we have! Do I give to charity? To support a child from an impoverished nation? Do I give more money to missionaries or to my church? John raises a couple of helpful points for us to think about when it comes to giving money to support others. First of all, do others give money to this organisation? This is a bit of an odd question. But if the choice is between supporting a Christian organisation that doesn't receive government support, or a secular charity that gets government support, then it's an easy choice: people who don't care about God aren't going to support Christian organisations! Secondly, how can we partner with people who are working for the truth? When we support an organisation or a missionary or the local church, where will enable the truth of Jesus to be shared as much as possible? This means we need to do our homework on who we are supporting and to be fully involved as



partners through praying for missionaries and church and trainees and Christian organisations. These aren't the only questions to ask when it comes to partnering financially, but they are important ones. For today, take some time out and look at your giving. Who are you supporting? Why do you give the money you have to this group/person? How are you praying for them?

### **Day 53**

- Read 3 John 9-10

- Think through the following questions:

1. John wrote to this church, but the request he made in his letter was rejected by someone who loved to lead/be first in the church. Who opposes him?
2. How is this person opposing John?
3. How is this person acting in the church he is involved in?

- Joy for Today:

- God's desire for churches is to be united around the truth of Jesus. Sadly, because of the sinfulness of people, this isn't always true. Sometimes in churches, people who are power-hungry end up in positions of leadership and abuse this responsibility. John is very concerned, because this seems to be what has happened in the church he is describing! There's a good chance you know about churches like this which have either collapsed or abandoned the truth of Jesus, and have left many people hurting along the way. This is why the New Testament has such helpful recommendations for who becomes a Christian leader (check out 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 for more details!). Today, pray for your Christian leaders - pastors, small group leaders, church leadership, the diocese/denomination head office, Christian organisations - and ask God to care for them. Ask that God will protect them from selfish desires or from becoming greedy for power or money. Ask that God will fill them, like John, with even more joy in seeing those under their leadership walking in the truth.

### **Day 54**

- Read 3 John 11-12

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does John call Gaius not to imitate? What does he say Gaius should imitate?
2. How does John describe these two categories?
3. How does John talk about Demetrius? Which one of these two categories does he fit into?

- Joy for Today:

- What do you think when you read the word, “imitate?” It’s an odd command for Christians, isn’t it?! But it is actually a pretty common one for Christians. Check out 1 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 3:9, Hebrews 13:7. What kinds of people should Christians imitate? This doesn’t necessarily mean we ought to try and say everything they say as an echo or dress exactly the same as them. This is about a way of life in response to the gospel of Jesus. So, how are you imitating what is good? Who’s life can you watch who is following Jesus and living it out as well as they can? Pray for them. Pray and ask God to grow you to be more like Jesus as you follow this role model in doing good. You might even want to ask them to catch up over coffee or a burger and ask them to read the Bible with you so you can see more of what living for Jesus looks like for them.

## Day 55

- Read 3 John 13-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why doesn’t John want to write any more to Gaius?
2. What does it mean to say “peace to you?”
3. What do you think “the friends” is code for?

- Joy for Today:

- Here we are at the end of eight weeks in John’s letters! Look back over the last eight weeks; what are the big things that God has challenged you with? Write them down here. \_\_\_\_\_

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Ask God to write his word on your heart, that by his Spirit, you can live a life filled with joy in obedience to and service in the truth for his Son, Jesus Christ.

## Day 56

- Church Service - Passage Covered: \_\_\_\_\_

- What was the talk about?: \_\_\_\_\_

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- What do I need to change? \_\_\_\_\_

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## This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

