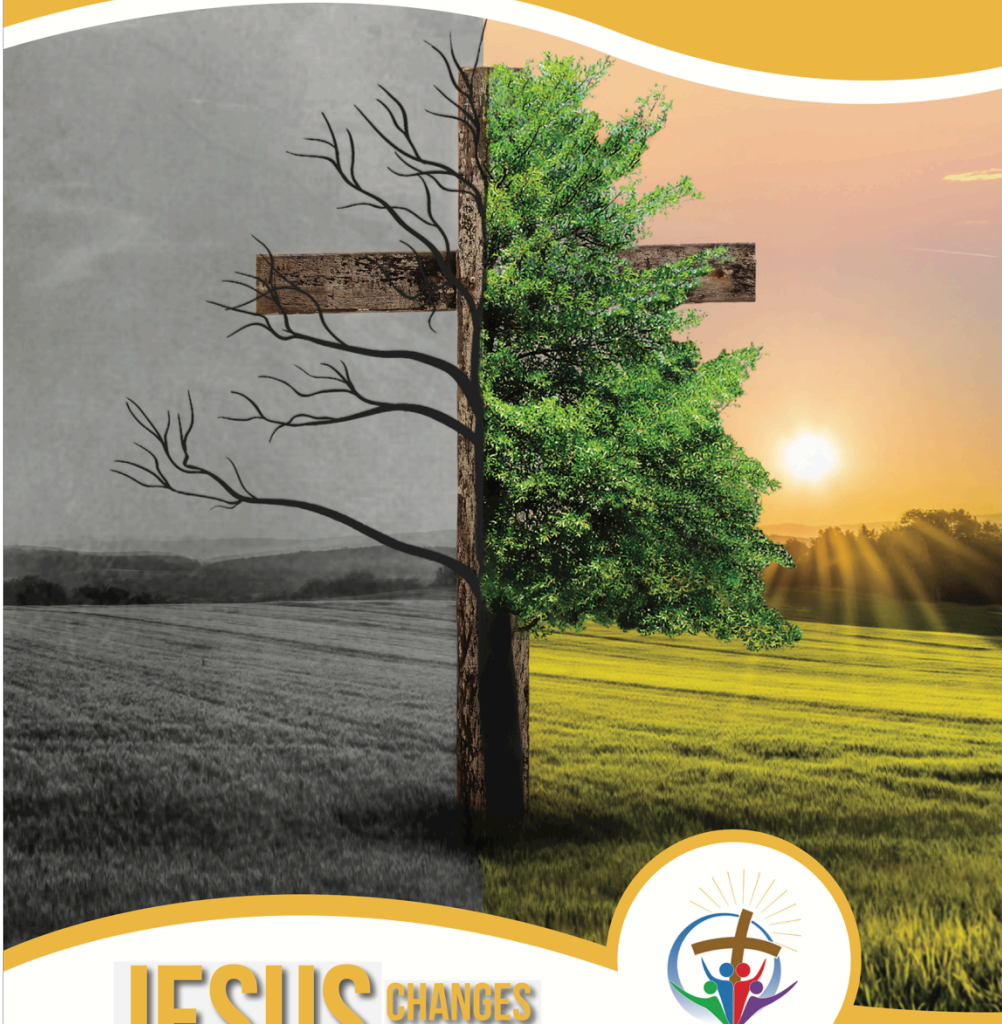


# JESUS CHANGES ME!



**JESUS** CHANGES EVERYTHING



**DeoGloria**  
Community Church



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## Introduction

# JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

We have just finished an amazing series, with the focus on how Jesus changed everything. When Jesus came, He did not go to the leaders of His time, the Jewish Council, or governor Pilate, or king Herod to share His world changing message and try to convince them to follow Him and transform the nations. He could easily have tried to influence the business people, and the important people to help Him to change the world. Instead He said: *“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.”* (Matthew 11:25 - NIV)

Jesus changed the world step by step. He started with a very small group. Eleven men who spend 3 years in His presence were taught the ways of the Lord and they, with other believers, walked across the known world to bring this message of reconciliation and transformation to the people. At first only a few started to follow Jesus, and later, as more and more people shared the Good News of the coming of Jesus, the world slowly started to transform. And it was not easy. Millions of followers of Jesus died in the quest to bring the Good News to the

world. And as we have seen in the previous study, Jesus impacted all levels of society: from equality for all, the care for the poor and marginalised; the transformation of the worth and dignity of women and children, to education.

Who is Jesus going to use to transform this generation? Who is He going to use to reconcile this world we live in with God? He will work in the same way as in the beginning of the church. He most certainly wants to change politics, business, art and schools, but He is still doing it one step at a time, changing and using ordinary people, like you and me.

Therefore, we believe that this series from the letter of John to the congregations in Asia Minor (the modern-day south-western Turkey) will help change us, one by one. The apostle John wrote this letter late in his life towards the end of the first century. Several false teachers had risen in the churches of that area. John uses strong terms to describe these men, showing that they were not true Christians who merely had different opinions on some minor matters. He calls them “false prophets.” Probably they had taken a number of church members with them and they were actively recruiting from those who had not left with them.



John wrote this letter to attack and refute the errors of the false prophets and to develop assurance of who Jesus Christ is. Jesus came to transform and reconcile. Jesus still, like in the beginning of His ministry, changes people one by one. He is the Game-Changer and He starts with each of us.

He starts with me. He changes me, so that I can be an instrument of change, truth and reconciliation in my family, amongst my friends, and in my community.

Are you willing to allow Jesus to change you? We pray that this study will transform you. Please allow God to work in and through you and be an agent of transformation and reconciliation.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20. NIV)*

**Deo Gloria – To God all the Glory!!!**



# JESUS CHANGES ME!


Week **1**

## Jesus our Life – brings new Life

**Memory verse:**

*..this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

**1 John 1:1b-2 (NIV)**

  
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**Day 1:**  
**Eternally existed with the Father**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:1-4**

What separates those who follow Jesus from the rest of the world is their view and understanding of who He is.

**Read Matthew 16:13-17**

Who is Jesus? For the world? And for you?

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**Read 1 John 1:1-2 again and Hebrews 1:1-3**

How do these verses impact your view of who Jesus is?

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John realized that when he heard Jesus speak, he was hearing the voice of God and that when he looked at

Jesus, he was looking at God. He realized that when he touched Jesus, he was touching God.

What does it mean that John calls Jesus, “the Life?”

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“A person who has the Son has life and a person who has not the Son of God has not life.” Jesus, the Son of God, is our Life.

What does it mean to have an eternal life?

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Jesus was and is and will forever be. From the beginning He was there. He is eternal. He had no beginning. He will have no ending. He is not part of creation, He is the source of creation. All life comes from him.

Christ is our Life and He has eternally existed with the Father. Everything else flows from this. This is a Biblical reality: Christ has existed without beginning from all eternity and He brings us life, eternal life.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2: Manifested in the flesh

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:1-4**

Why is it important that Jesus was fully human?

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John claimed that they have touched and heard and saw Jesus. The eternal Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and who was God; this Christ appeared in flesh. He became a man so that He can relate with people and be their perfect mediator.

How would you explain the fact that Jesus was fully God and fully human (incarnation)?

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Through the ages people have struggled to understand the incarnation of Jesus. It was even a struggle in the early Church.

## **Read 2 John 7**

Some people find it easier to believe in a mystical, spiritual Jesus. But many people struggle to believe that Jesus, as God, came to this earth as a baby, grew up as a child of normal parents and went on to die on a cross for the sins of the world. Because if this is true, every single person in the world must obey this Jesus. Then everything He said is true and perfect and therefore everybody must obey His commands.

What does the fact that Jesus became flesh mean to you and for your life?

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We are no longer self-sufficient; we can no longer do our own thing; or depend on our own wisdom to find life, because He said: "I am the way the truth and the life."

When Jesus becomes a man, people ceases to be the measure of all things, and He becomes the measure of all things.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





**Day 3:**  
**Fellowship with Father and Son**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:1-4 and John 17:6-11**

Describe the relationship between Father and Son.

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The relationship between Father and Son is very intimate and close. Jesus said He and the Father is one, and that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Describe your fellowship with Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

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Fellowship means, "to be in close association with someone." True Christianity is an experience rooted in the truth about God and it is realized in a relationship with God and with other believers.

To say you have fellowship with the Father and his Son means that you have come to share their values. You believe what they believe and love what they love. It means you delight to spend time with God.

How do you think your fellowship with God can grow and become even more intimate?

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It starts with a love for God's Word. God speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit. We pray daily for His help to respond to His Word as we should. We learn to trust Him as we walk with Him. God draws near to us in his Word and we draw near to Him in prayer.

Pray and daily ask God to teach you to trust Him more for the small things and the bigger things in life. You can't have fellowship with Jesus if you don't trust Him.

Your fellowship with God grows as you witness about Him and who He is and what He did and is still doing, grows. Love what He loves and hate what He hates.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 4: Fellowship with other believers

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:1-4; 15:9-17 and John 17:20-23**

How would you describe the term "fellowship?"

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John proclaims these truths about Jesus Christ so that that people in believing in Christ have fellowship with each other. To have fellowship is to have an experience of sharing something significant in common with others. It's the pleasure of being in a group when you see eye to eye on what really matters and having similar values and responding with the same kind of affections to what really counts.

What would it look like to love one another in our everyday lives?

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It's easy to love the lovely people; but what about those unlovely people that we meet sometimes on a daily basis? Loving one another begins with loving God. Jesus frequently spoke of love and taught how to love one another. He spoke of forgiveness and how we should not hate one another. To love someone and to have fellowship with someone is to respect the person, the way God is respecting him or her.

Is there anything that prevents you to have fellowship with other believers? If yes, write it down. How do you think you can change it?

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As children of God, who is part of His family, we should have the desire to deepen our relationship with God and with God's people. We don't live in solitary confinement and we will never grow in isolation from other Christians. True Christianity is an experience of fellowship with God and with His people.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# Day 5: Fullness of joy in sharing the Gospel

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:1-4 and John 15:1-8**

Read verse 4 again. Why did John write this letter?

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God is a God of relationships. He wants to have intimate communion with us. He delights in our presence. To enjoy fellowship with God, must also be our desire, because it brings great joy to Him and us. Now John says that our joy in God's presence is made complete knowing that others could also have communion with God.

People say it is wrong for a Christian to pursue his own happiness. That is not true. God commands us to delight ourselves in the Lord and to count it all joy when we lay down our lives in order to share the joy of His salvation with others.

**Read 2 John 4 and 3 John 4**

How do you feel when you see other Christians growing in their faith and conquering sin? Why do you feel the way you feel?

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Our joy can increase when we see how our brothers and sisters in Christ are growing in their faith. John says in 3 John 4: *“I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth”*

Our joy in the Lord is essential for us to keep growing. John Piper points out, *“we cannot glorify God properly unless we enjoy Him thoroughly.”* The joy of the Lord and in the Lord is necessary for our own spiritual growth. We must also learn to grow in our joy in the Lord.

We can't glorify God if our joy in Him is not genuine and complete. To share the Good News with others causes them to also share in our joy in Jesus Christ.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Prayer

#### Memory verse:

*..this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

*1 John 1:1b-2 (NIV)*

#### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

#### Scripture Reading:

1 John 1:1-4, 2 John 4 and 3 John 4

## Discussion questions

Read 1 John 1:1. John made it clear that they had physical contact with Jesus. Why is it important that John and others heard, saw, and touched Jesus?

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Read 1 John 1:2-3. Believers often say that fellowship with other is not always possible? Why might they say that?

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These verses picture communion with God. What are some reasons why our own fellowship with God may be lacking? How can we grow in communion with God?

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Read 1 John 1:4, 2 John 4 and 3 John 4. One of the reasons John wrote this letter was to promote joy. What are some ways we can sustain our joy in God and others?

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**Close in prayer**



# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **2**

## Jesus cleanses me completely

**Memory verse:**

*... the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from  
all sin.*

*1 John 1:7(c) (NIV)*

JESUS CHANGES  
EVERYTHING







# Day 1: Light versus darkness

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:5-2:2**

First John is built around the repetition of the three main themes: light vs. darkness, love vs. hatred, and truth vs. error. These three "strands" weave in and out of the letter. In these days many Christians think they have fellowship with God but they do not. Many religious people think they are true sons of God but are not. Therefore, it is important that we apply John's teaching and examine our own lives carefully. Let us explore together: How should a Christian live?

This week we will learn how important it is to continually "walk in the light of Jesus" and that only the blood of Jesus can purify us from "darkness" and sin.

**Read John 3:19-21**

What specifically do light and darkness symbolize?

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List as many characteristics of light as you can.

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**Read 1 John 1:7**

God is light - this defining characteristic of God means that there is no darkness in Him. Which two promises do we receive if we walk in the light (as God is in the light)?

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What happens to our partnership with God when we walk in darkness?

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God is light, and Satan is the prince of darkness (Luke 22:53). To obey God is to walk in the light; to disobey Him is to walk in darkness. John points out that it is possible for people to say they are in the light, yet actually live in darkness. Fellowship with God is a matter of choosing light above darkness.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2: Truth versus Lies

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:5-10**

We have seen on last weeks study that "fellowship" means to share, have in common, to partake. It is an association with people who share one's interests.

What is John's test to determine if we have fellowship with God?

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What does John describe as a major hindrance to true fellowship (with God and people)?

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In this paragraph John notes three lies found among religious people. Identify the lie in verse 6-7 and describe it in your own words.

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The basis of John's doctrine is God's "character". Name His characteristics according to verse 5(b)

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Reflect on verses 5 and 6 and try to picture what happens in your life when you act in direct opposition to God's way.

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How does it impact your fellowship with God and with other people?

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People who say they are in the light, yet actually live in darkness, are living a lie – there is no truth in what they pretend to be. Talk to Father about your fellowship with Him.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 3:  
The Reality of SIN**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:8**

What lie is exposed in this verse?

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NO-ONE is without sin. Yes, this means Christians do sin, but this does not mean they must be saved all over again.

Sin in the life of the believer breaks the fellowship but does not destroy the sonship. A true Christian is always accepted even if his or her sin is not acceptable.

**Read Romans 5:6-9**

How does God provide for the sins of the saints?

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Christ's wounds testify that He died for us, and therefore God can forgive when we confess our sins.

**Read Romans 8:31–34**

The word “confess” means “to say the same thing.” To confess sin means to say the same thing about it that God says. Keep in mind that Christians do not have to do penance, make sacrifices, or punish themselves when they have sinned. Every sin has already been taken care of at the cross.

Does this give us license to sin?

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The Christian who truly understands God’s provision for a life of holiness does not want to deliberately disobey God, but acknowledges that despite his intentions, he still disobeys God’s will and thereby sins.

What does our denial or confession of sin reveal about the reality of our relationship with God?

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**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





**Day 4:**  
**The way to forgiveness**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:5-10 and Proverbs 28:13**

1 John 1:9 we find one of the most profound Scriptural explanations of God's way to forgiveness. Today we want to reinforce this Godly process of redemption.

Compare verses 9 and 10 with Proverbs 28:13. What two choices do we have when we sin?

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Think about how disagreements can affect your relationships. How does reluctance to admit wrongdoing widen the gap between you and those you love? How does genuine apology close it?

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How does our response to sin affect our relationship with God? If you can, write an example from personal experience.

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What would it mean for you to keep short accounts with God by confessing sin whenever you are aware of it? What can you do to make this more of a habit in your life?

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List some advantages of confessing your sins to God right away. Then talk to the Father about this in prayer.

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## **Day 5: That we might not sin**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 1:5 - 2:1-2**

One of John's purposes for the writing of this epistle is: That we might not sin. Here John explains how we may have victory over sin and how to get forgiveness when we do sin.

Although it is not necessary for us to sin - we still sin! However - Jesus speaks in our defence, but He also removes our sin.

**Read Romans 8:1**

Compare 1 John 1:7 with Romans 8:1 and describe the extent to which you are cleansed.

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The penalty of sin is taken care of when the sinner trusts Christ, but the power of sin over the daily life is another

matter. Refer to 1 John 1:9 and describe what Jesus also does:

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**Read 1 John 2:2(a)**

What is the descriptive image that John uses to describe Jesus?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

## Prayer

### Memory verse:

*... the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*1 John 1:7(c) (NIV)*

### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

### Scripture Reading:

1 John 1:5-2:2 and Proverbs 28:13

## Discussion questions

Read 1 John 1: 9-10 and Proverbs 28:13. Compare these verses and discuss what two choices we have when we sin.

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Share something about each choice from your own experience. How does coming to Christ change one's relationship to sin?

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Read the memory verse aloud as a group. What is the basis for a person to be forgiven his/her sins? Discuss.

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**Close in prayer**

# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **3**

## Jesus brings certainty

**Memory verse:**

*But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

*1 John 2:5 and 6 (NIV)*

JESUS CHANGES  
EVERYTHING



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# Day 1: Knowing Jesus

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

## **Read 1 John 2:3-14**

Examinations are performed daily in all spheres of life, Doctors examine ill patients, learners are doing exams, new products are tested. In our journey with God we need to constantly examine ourselves by asking ourselves: how am I doing as Christian? Am I walking in faith in Christ or am I wandering off the beaten track in the dark; am I walking in the light? In this week's study we will take a closer look at how you can have certainty in your walk with God.

## **Read 1 John 2:3-5**

According to these verses, what is involved in knowing God?

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How would you define your relationship with Jesus, is He an acquaintance, a workmate, friend, bosom friend?

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What can you do to get to know Jesus better?

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There are different types of relationships. There are acquaintances - people you have met but do not know. Then there are colleagues/classroom mates, people you know slightly better. Next comes friends, people with whom you will occasionally get together, you know them and relate well to them. Then there are those close friends - bosom friends - people whom you trust, whom you respect, care about and love. Close friends with whom you have a deep relationship.

Many people say they know Jesus, but they just know about Him. God wants us to know Jesus like knowing bosom friends.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 2:**  
**Are you sure you know Jesus?**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2: 4 and 5 and John 14:15**

How can you tell if you are in Christ and know Him?

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**Read John 15:9-12**

What is the outward evidence of obedience?

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What do you think John means when he says that the person who obeys God has God's love "made complete" in him or her?

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What is he trying to emphasize and why is it important to have God's love "made complete" in you?

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Our love for God is made complete through obedience. Obedience in this instance is not driven by fear, but rather out of love for God. I have met God, I know God, I experience Him, my soul is satisfied in Him. Because God loved me first, God reached out to me, God created me and the way that I know best to glorify Him, is to love Him, with my whole heart and soul, I long to obey Him. If you obey Christ, you walk in the light, if you walk in the light, you know Him.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 3:  
Live like Jesus**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:6-8 and John 15:12-17**

Name one specific way that you are like one of your parents.

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What does it mean to live like Jesus did? Be practical.

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How did Jesus demonstrate His love for you?

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Does this change the way you live? How?

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Name one specific way that you are like Jesus.

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To know Jesus is to live in Jesus, to live in His love and to remain in that position for eternity. This union is established and is bound by Jesus's love for us. Nothing can separate us from this union, not sin, not death, no evil powers because Christ Jesus lay down His life for us, so that we are called His friends. To live like Jesus therefore is to know Him, to know His teachings, to follow in His steps, to love people like Him and to lay down your life for others so that they too may know Jesus.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# Day 4: Live in the light

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:7-11, 2 John 5 and John 12:36**

What command is John writing about in verse 7?

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How can this commandment be old and new at the same time?

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How would you define "love" and "hate"?

LOVE: \_\_\_\_\_

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HATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you think of someone in your life with a particular ability to love? In what ways does this encourage you to love as Jesus commands here?

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Why do you think John encourages love for Christians?

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The commandment to love one another was there from the beginning. Sin and evil crept in and all were lost, until Jesus was crucified and resurrected, restoring us and reinstating the old commandment - love one another.

Darkness and light are two worlds apart. Darkness represents evil, whereas light represents God's holiness, goodness and His love. Darkness cannot extinguish light. However, light extinguishes darkness. The sun rises and darkness disappears, you light a candle and it shines in the darkness. Love will always overcome hate.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





## **Day 5: Be sure!**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:11**

Why would love for our brothers serve as a test of being in the light?

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**Read 1 John 2:12-14**

After, this week's study and Scripture reading, what assurance does this passage give you?

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What do the distinctions he makes with different groups tell us about how we should care for people?

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After much teaching comes the blessed reassurance from God: *You are my children, you know Me. Yes, there might be times where you go wandering off in the dark, but My love for you will always be like a light shining, calling you to come to Me. Come abide, my friend, come experience, come know Me. You know these truths, your sins are forgiven, you have overcome evil, you know the Father. You are strong in Me. Remain in My love.*

Spend time in prayer, talking to Father about His love and His guidance.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

## Prayer

### Memory verse:

*But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

*1 John 2:5 and 6 (NIV)*

### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

### Scripture Reading:

1 John 2:3-14 and James 5:16

## Discussion questions

How can you tell a fake Christian from a real one?

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In what ways can we encourage and help each other not to sin?

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How can you tell if your relationship with God is real or fake? Does this mean if we ever sin, it is not real?

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What do you see here about the relationship between the words that we say and our actions?

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**Close in prayer**

# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **4**

## Choose who you love

**Memory verse:**

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*

**1 John 2:15 (NIV)**

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING







# Day 1: The world and worldliness

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

## **Read 1 John 2:15-17**

The word “world” is used 185 times in the New Testament. John uses it 105 times and in 5 different ways. The ways (meanings) are as follows:

- a) The universe at large
- b) The earth
- c) A very large group of people – the majority of people
- d) the whole race of sinful people who are in opposition to God
- e) the whole moral order of society organized under the powers of evil and in rebellion against God.

## **Read 1 John 2:15**

According to this verse, what meaning of *the world* do you think John refers to here?

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## **Read Romans 12:2**

What do you think is meant with the expression “pattern of this world”?

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Worldliness has its own pattern of thinking and living that can easily suck people into it. Believers must be aware of this and avoid the world around you squeezing you into its own mould. Often, we hear believers boldly claim that they will not allow it, but Satan’s ways are not always easily detected.

## **Read 2 Timothy 4:10**

What happened to Demas, Paul’s co-worker?

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The pervasive influence of modern media means the tug of the world is greater now than it ever has been. Daily we are bombarded with people telling us that we can’t be happy unless we own the product that they are selling or adopt the lifestyle that they are pursuing. We thumb



through magazines that lure us with beautiful homes, new cars, luxury items, or expensive vacations that all can be ours, if we just get enough money or go into enough debt. Christian attempts to counter worldliness often have swung to the opposite direction: withdrawal from the world, along with extra rules to reign in the flesh. This is the method of the monastic movement and of isolationist groups, such as the Amish.

Romans 12:2 states clearly that the only way we can withstand the lure of the world, is by daily allowing the Holy Spirit to renew our minds.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2: Loving the world

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:15-17**

In verse 16 we find a description of everything in the world that does not come from the Father.

Identify the three categories and give a brief description of what you understand about these categories. Give examples from our times:

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Max Lucado describes the categories as: *“the desire to enjoy things, the desire to achieve things, the desire to*

*get things.” Griffith Thomas says “it is the desire of having; the desire of seeing and the desire of being.”*

Read the following scripture references and see if you can identify a pattern of worldliness:

Genesis 3: 1-7	
Joshua 7:20-21	

**Read Proverbs 27:20 and Romans 13:14**

What warning do we find in these verses?

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We all battle temptations daily and we often fail. If you go on yielding to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life as your way of life, you are not maintaining love for the Father. Rather, you are maintaining love for the world. Worldly people stumble over these things; God’s children fight them continually.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 3: Loving the Father

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

The opposite of loving the world is loving the Father. John uses “Father” to describe God in 1 John 2:15 and 16. It focuses us on God’s tender love for us as His children. It is the Father’s first love for us that motivates us to love Him in response (1 John 4:19).

But it is not only loving the Father, but also obeying Him, *“doing the will of God.”* It is significant that the Bible directs its commandments to our hearts or affections.

Read the following verses. What do they say about keeping God’s commandments?

John 14:15	
John 15:10	

**Read Matthew 22:37**

What is the greatest commandment?

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Any love relationship must be maintained, and that is also true of your relationship with the Father.

Take time to reflect on your relationship with the Father. Do you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind? If not, what should change in your life?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 4:  
Choose who you love!**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read John 3:16-17**

Compare these verses with the commandment given in 1 John 2:15. How would you explain this seemingly opposing commandments?

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There is a difference between the world and worldliness (see day 1 of this week.) We should not confuse reaching out to the world with the gospel, with worldliness.

Love for the world and love for God are mutually exclusive. A person can't do both.

## **Read Luke 16:13**

What warning do we find here? Do you think it is applicable to you?

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You must make a basic decision in life: Will you live to know God and His eternal love, or will you live for this world and its fleeting pleasures? You can't have a bit of both.

Once you've made that decision, you must fight to maintain your choice against the strong current of the world. It is an ongoing battle. "Love," the Greek word "agape," indicating that it is a commitment, not a feeling, that John is commanding. The only way that you can fight the love of the world is to maintain and grow in your love for the Father.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 5: Consequences of your choices

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:17 and 1 Corinthians 7:31(b)**

What is the difference between the result of loving the world or loving the Father as it is explained here?

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A key reason to obey God's commandments is the transitory nature of this world and its lusts, as contrasted with the eternal promise of heaven.

If you love the world or the things in the world, you will lose them all at death. All that the worldly person lives for is gone in an instant and means nothing in light of eternity.

Read the following verses and describe the promises we find there in your own words:



John 6:51,58	
John 8:51	
John 10:25	
John 11:25-26	

Eternal life is not something that begins after your earthly life, it is available and given to believers while they are still living on earth.

Do you live a life that is reflecting the fact that you have received eternal life?

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In 1989, Tom Sine wrote some insightful words that apply just as much now, as then (*Christianity Today* [3/17/89], p. 52):

*Whatever commands our time, energy and resources, commands us. And if we are honest, we will admit that our lives really aren't that different from those of our secular counterparts. We hang around church buildings a little more. We abstain from a few things. But we simply aren't that different.*

*As a result of this unfortunate accommodation of the world, Christianity is reduced to little more than a spiritual crutch to help us through life. God is there to help us get our promotions, our house in the suburbs, and our bills paid. Somehow God has become a co-conspirator in our agendas instead of our becoming a co-conspirator in His.*

Are you building for eternity or living for the here and the now? Talk to Father about this in prayer.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

## Prayer

### Memory verse:

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*

*1 John 2:15 (NIV)*

### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

### Scripture Reading:

1 John 2:15-17, Proverbs 27:20 and Luke 16:13

## Discussion questions

Read 1 John 2:15 and Luke 16:13. Why does John not give us the option, which seems possible, to be partially committed both to God and to the world?

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Read 1 John 2:16 and Proverbs 27:20. The three worldly desires of verse 16 point us to the problem of the enemy within us. How does this help us understand the true nature of worldliness?

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Does “not loving the world” mean that it is wrong for a Christian to seek to succeed in business or a career? Why or why not? Discuss.

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Do you agree with Tom Sine who says that we are not that different from the world? Do you think it affects our

role as disciple makers? What should change in our lives?

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**Close in prayer**



# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **5**

## Spiritual Discernment and trust

**Memory verse:**

*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God:  
Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus  
Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but  
every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is  
not from God.*

**1 John 4:2-3 (NIV)**

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# Day 1: Anointed by the Holy Spirit

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:18-21 and 26-27**

Christian life is a battle, there will always be opposition. What opposition do you know of or are you experiencing yourself? How does John encourage you to handle opposition?

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Christian life is and always was a battle. Opposition will never stop. It is fruitless to think it will end, or that you are doing something wrong or that God must end our struggles against people and the evil enemy. Don't go in despair, as children of God we are in a lifelong battle against our own sins and the onslaught of the world and the devil.

God will never be caught off guard. Through our trials and tribulations, He is transforming us, because He is more concerned for our holiness than our happiness, because He knows that to live a holy life is to be truly happy.

What does it mean for you to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, amidst struggles and opposition?

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To be anointed by the Holy Spirit means that He will lead believers in the truth and teach them the things they need to know to stand against opposition. He warns us as believers to continue to be vigilant and to never let our guard down.


How do you interpret verse 27? Do we only need the Holy Spirit and no other people to teach us?

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John is not saying that the church does not need godly teachers to instruct the body. Jesus's last commandment to the apostles was to teach His disciples. What John is saying is, that every Christian has the indwelling Holy Spirit to enable him or her to understand and interpret Scripture. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit reveals to us the riches that God has prepared for us. Read the Word yourself, in dependence on the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 2:**  
**Beware of Spiritual  
Deception**  
**JESUS CHANGES  
EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:18-23 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4**

We live in a time where there daily are new and more cunning Internet and other scams. It asks of you to be constantly alert.

How will you feel if someone steals your identity and money by scamming you?

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It's traumatic when thieves steal your identity and your money, but it is even more traumatic and tragic, when we allow people to deceive us spiritually. The stakes are much higher than any earthly risk. Satan is planning since Jesus came, to deceive His church and to send false teachers. To avoid spiritual deception, we must develop Biblical discernment and be vigilant at all times.

What do you think "the last hour" in verse 18 means?

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The period between Jesus' ascension and His return is called the last hour. A feature of the end of times era is the presence of false teachers. These false teachers come from within. Some of them may have been elders or pastors.

### **Read Acts 20:30**

False teachers use Christian terminology and say they are Christians, but they are not. They often attract people from within the church and have attractive personalities. Their teaching sounds good, and they are often nothing more than good motivational speakers. And many people flock to listen to them, because their messages let people feel good, but their messages very rarely transform people's lives over the long term. In many cases there is a lot of money involved and people feel obliged to give.

Beware of anyone who teaches a "new theology." Hold on to the sound doctrines of the salvation of Jesus out of love and grace. Jesus is the same today, yesterday and tomorrow.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 3: Stand against false teachings

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:18-23 and Matthew 7:15-17**

What is your definition of a false teacher? Which modern day teachings do you regard as false teachings?

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Modern day false teachers teach people that you just must believe in God and give enough money and God will give you a huge financial blessing. They teach that hell is not real, or that Jesus is not God or that He is God's adopted son. False teachers say that we can't say to people that their sins are wrong, because then we are judgemental. False teachers tell people that love is more important than obedience and that all religions eventually leads to God. False teachers teach that same sex marriage is acceptable in the eyes of God and that if we stand against any of the above teachings, we are not loving, we are fundamentalists, sexist, and judgemental.

How do you stand against false teaching with love and boldness?

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### **Read 2 Timothy 3:16**

True Christians are born of God. The key issue with false teachers is that they did not share the new life in Christ and allowed Him to transform them into humble obedience. To stand against false teachers you must know your Bible. Be slow to answer, get your Biblical facts right. Study the Bible systematically. Study church history, most errors today have been around for centuries. We must be able to identify false prophets by aligning what they teach and say with Scripture and by how they act.

Make sure that you will identify false teachings easily and teach your children what to look out for. Show your children how false teachings fall short of the true, biblical gospel. Be actively involved in a church, don't just "go to church", but be a vital part of your church and allow your church to be a central part of your family's life. False teachers often lure people with a sense of belonging.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# Day 4: Abide in God

## JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:22-25 and John 15:14-5**

How would you recognise false teachers and as John describes it here, the antichrist?

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A false teacher teaches that one can attain knowledge about God and Jesus through philosophy or logic and that we must spiritualize the Biblical truths. They teach that the virgin birth and the resurrection are mythical events that never really took place, and must be interpreted spiritually.

How does John say we must stand against false teachers?

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If we remain in the Word and maintain our closeness to God in prayer and obedience, we will be able to stand against false prophets. The gospel is not a set of doctrines to agree to, but a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Read 1 John 2:27-28**

What does it mean to abide? How do you know if you are abiding in the truth and in Christ?

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Abide in the things that we have heard from the beginning. As sinners we are lost in our sins, but God through Jesus Christ's death, reconciled sinners with Him. He made them new creations and gave them His Holy Spirit. Abide in this. God Himself promised us eternal life! Why turn to anything else?

If we ignore these things and lose the influence and effect of both the Scriptures and the power of the Spirit, our lives will be in turmoil.

To follow Jesus isn't just to follow a list of rules in order to make God happy and to stay out of trouble. When Jesus was asked what one can do to have eternal life, He only



mentioned two rules, “love God with all you heart and soul and mind, and you neighbours as yourself.

To abide in God is to love God and to pursue a life of fullness in God.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 5: Called to a life of love

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 3:18-24**

Think of three people you find hard to love. What steps can you take to love them better?

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We are called to live a life of love, because we were first loved by God. Our actions should speak louder than our words. Essentially love is neither sentiment nor talk, but deeds. If our love is to be genuine it will inevitably be positive and constructive, with actions.

What is the role of our conscience? (Refer to verses 20 and 21) Why is it important to have a clean and peaceful conscience?

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Our conscience serves as God's monitor of our souls. It calls us to account regarding our love for God and others. If we fall short, it will rightly accuse us. Sometimes people live with guilt about things that they had no control

over, or of sins that is long forgiven and then their consciences, accuse them unjustly. Turn to God with unjust guilt, He is greater and more knowledgeable than our own hearts.

Reflect on your life. How does the presence and practice of sin in your life inhibit your relationship with God? Is there anything in your life that is creating tension between you and God?

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It is helpful at times to examine our failures and learn from them. Why did I sin in that way? How can I avoid that sin in the future? But it is not helpful to dwell on your sins and become introspective to the point of depression. You've got to know your own heart here. Due to personality or other factors some are more prone to be introspective. Some are by nature such perfectionists that if they do not come up to God's perfect standard of love, they condemn themselves, even after they've confessed their sins. While we should maintain a sensitive conscience and not tolerate any disobedience or sin, at the same time we need to accept our human limitations. Our overall focus should be on what God is doing in our lives, not on our failures.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Prayer

#### Memory verse:

*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.*

*1 John 4:2-3 (NIV)*

#### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

#### Scripture Reading:

1 John 2:15-2:27, 3:18-24 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4

## Discussion questions

Read 1 John 2:15-27. Christian life is a battle. There will always be opposition. What difference does it make in our lives to grasp this truth? What other biblical truths can encourage us in the ongoing conflict that is part of Christian life?

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Read 1 John 2:18-23 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4. How do you develop discernment without becoming sceptical of everyone and everything? Since there are so many views of different doctrines, how can you know that you are right?

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Read 1 John 2:26-27. Why is it crucial to link the Spirit with the Word? Does the Spirit give direct revelation today? If so, how can you know if it is the Holy Spirit?

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Read 1 John 3:18-24. How does knowing God's love for you strengthen your faith? Where does the ultimate source of our reassurance come from?

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**Close in prayer**

# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **6**

## Living as a child of God

**Memory verse:**

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

*1 John 3:1(a) (NIV)*

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING



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# Day 1: God calls me His child!

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 2:28-3:3**

1 John talks about the fellowship with God that is ours in Jesus Christ. John is eager for us to enjoy this fellowship and not forfeit it for a life of sin and bondage. He has talked about the enemies of that fellowship within us (our sin and our tendency to deceive ourselves that all is well) and around us (the world and antichrists). In this passage, he continues to urge us and encourage us to protect and enjoy that relationship. He does so by reminding us of the second coming of Christ and of the righteousness of God. He reminds us that God has made us His very own children, with all the status and privileges this implies. This means we can enter His presence with great confidence and joy. Still, we should make sure that evidence of that standing with God is present in our lives.

**Read 1 John 3:1**

Why does John have such a sense of amazement, wonder and awe when he tells how God, in His love, allows us to be called “children of God”?

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Do you share his amazement?

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John wants us to be as astonished as he is when we think on this truth. The King James Version catches it well when it translates the verse, “Behold! What manner of love the Father has given unto us...” The word “Behold” is in the Greek text. (it can also be translated: pay attention!) John is saying, “Look! Consider this tremendous thing!” Forget everything else and focus your attention here if you really want to see something! You are children of God. Amazing!

There are two reasons why we don't share John's amazement: we forget where we came from and we forget where we are going. We do not realize the privilege of our position. John's news will never amaze us as long as we feel that, in some way, we deserve our status as children of God. We need to understand the truth that, by nature, we are objects of God's wrath. We

deserve only the most severe judgment and condemnation. When we see that, wonder and amazement will characterize our response to God's kindness.

The Bible is very clear about your identity before God – as the following verses will confirm:

**Read Isaiah 43:1**, but add your NAME in to the text in the appropriate places:

But now, this is what the Lord says - he who created you, ....., he who formed you, ....., "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; ..... you are mine.

**Read John 1:12-13** and do the same:

Yet to ..... who did receive him, to ..... who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — ..... born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The immensity of the privileges and the security of our standing as dearly loved children is what this week is all about.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 2:**  
**How Jesus' second coming affects  
being His child**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

Jesus promised that He would return the same way He has left. The early church was much more aware of this reality than we as modern-day Western followers of Christ. John expresses a sense of urgency for us to abide in Christ so that we may have confidence when he returns.

**Read 1 John 2:28 and 3:2**

Write down the words that indicate that John was eagerly awaiting the second coming of Jesus.

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**Read 1 John 3:3**

How should Jesus' imminent return alter our faith, daily lives, and priorities?

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The compelling urgency to ABIDE in Jesus is one aspect of living with an expectancy or longing for Christ's return. Another aspect is living in HOPE (1 John 3:3(a)). Paul compares our "hope" in Jesus with a mother nearing the end of her pregnancy.

**Read Romans 8:19, 24-25**

What does this teach you about a LIVING hope on Jesus' return?

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Does this hope - the confident assurance of Christ's appearing - serve as a purifying influence in your life?

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One could say abiding in Christ while hoping for His return are like the two sides of the "coin" of being a child of God. It is very significant that John incorporates the assurance of the second coming of Jesus in his call to actively live in fulfilment of our "child-ship" of God.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 3: Loved by the Father

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

A very important Biblical truth that you must bear in mind, is that Jesus is God's only begotten Son – we are His adopted children!

**Read Romans 8:14-17(a)**

See how clear the Bible is on this and write it in your own words.

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God takes the initiative in our adoption. He does so, not because of anything worthwhile He sees in us, but despite all the ugliness, hate, and rebellion He look into our hearts. God is in the business of adopting wrongdoers. The immensity of the privileges and the security of our standing as dearly loved children is something that leaves us in awe.

Read the following verses and in your own words, write down how God appreciates you:

1 John 2:29 (b and c)	
1 John 3:1(a)	
1 John 3:2(a)	
1 John 3:2(b)	

In Romans 8:16 Paul wrote: “*The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*” Isn’t that reassuring?

**Read 1 John 5:9-13** to hear John’s final remarks on assurance of salvation and write down what speaks to your heart:

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**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





## Day 4: Being a child of God

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

Being a child of God is not an accomplishment and is much more than only a privilege. It is becoming what God intended you to be (Psalm 139) and therefore is a way of living and an unwavering responsibility.

John distinguishes three essential actions or activities of being a child of God. Read each of the following Scriptures and name the specific practice/activity identified there:

1 John 2:28(a)	
1 John 2:29, 3:7	
1 John 3:3	

To “abide” in Jesus is to actively remain and continue in Him. Jesus encourages us to abide in Him and He in us, as branches in the vine.

**Read 1 John 2:28(a) and 3:6**

Be brutally honest in answering the following questions:  
Are you abiding in Jesus?

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Do you consider yourself one who strives to do this? Why or why not?

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In His Beatitudes Jesus twice declared: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. and “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:6 and 10)

Can you honestly say that you strive to practice righteousness?

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Even if you do not live perfectly - do you live righteously?  
What is the difference between living perfectly and living righteously?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 5: Living as a child of God

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

John reminds his readers that God has made us his very own children, with all the status and privilege this implies. He warns us to turn away from sin and to walk in righteousness (godliness) and make sure that evidence of that standing with God is present in our lives.

### **Read 1 John 3:3**

Do you live a pure life?

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### **Read 1 John 3:4-10**

John explains the importance to continually live a righteous life. What truth stands out for you - what strikes you the most?

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What distinctions are evident according to verse 10?

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Why does “no child” born of God have a life characterized by sin, according to verse 4-6?

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Why does “no child” born of God have a life characterized by sin, according to verse 9?

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What are some of the things you need to change in your life to better reflect that you truly are born of God? Write them down and spend some time in prayer with Father. Acknowledge them and ask Him both for forgiveness for and assistance with the change.

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**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Prayer

#### **Memory verse:**

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

*1 John 3:1(a) (NIV)*

#### **Reflection:**

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

#### **Scripture Reading:**

1 John 2:28-3:10

## Discussion questions

Who are you in Christ?

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Would you say you generally think about the second coming as a motivation for living? If not, why not? Why is it to our detriment to think infrequently of Christ's return? What steps can you take to think about it more often, and to live acknowledging it?

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What do you find most surprising or helpful about the list of traits in 1 John 3:4-10 that indicate whether someone is considered a part of God's family or is associated with the devil?

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Are we children of God because we behave righteously,  
or do we behave righteously because we are Children of  
God?

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**Close in prayer**



# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **7**

## Love: The DNA of God's children

**Memory verse:**

*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.*

*1 John 3:16 (NIV)*

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING





# Day 1: Love each other!

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

Have you ever noticed that most songs are related to love, how most movies have a love story in it? It is because love is what this world needs. One of the most famous songs sung by the Beatles, was *All you need is love*. These words remain true, all we do need is LOVE. However, there is a stark difference between God's LOVE and that which the world defines as love. At the core of Christianity is love, it is our DNA, derived from God who is LOVE.

**Read 1 John 3:11 and John 13:34-35**

What is the main message which you have heard from the beginning of your walk with God?

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Why is love so essential for God's disciples?

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Love is the message which we have heard from the beginning: God's love for us and the command to love. By loving each other we are doing exactly that what God designed us to do. When we do not love, we are going against God's designed plan. People are created in the image of God. God is love. Because we are created in His image, which is love, we are capable of loving. Unfortunately, sin also became part of our nature through Adam. And, so we need a Saviour. Love is the mark of a true disciple!

Unfortunately, love is expressed as something totally different in songs and movies. How does our culture's understanding of love affect our relationships, our friendships, our communities, our churches and our societies?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2: What is love?

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 3:11-17 and 4:7-21**

What is Love? To answer this question, note the words *This is* and what it says after these two words.

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**Read Genesis 4:6-7 and Hebrews 11:4**

John tells us to love one another and then provides an example of how not to love one another. What are some things we can learn from Cain's example about how not to treat one another?

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What did God tell Cain to do in order to overcome his anger and depression?

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What was the real reason Cain murdered his brother?

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**Read 1 John 3:16**

Write this verse in your own words.

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Love is Jesus Christ sacrificing Himself for us!  
Love is God sending His Son as atoning sacrifice for our sins!

Love is God living in us through His Spirit!  
Love is complete in us, love (God) has become a part of us, in us.

God is love!

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 3: From death to life

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 3:14-15**

In calling us to a life of love, John first gives us an example of hate that helps us understand love and calls us to self-examination. What does this passage tell us about hate? What is its object, its origin and how does it manifest itself?

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What does the presence of hate and the absence of love indicate about a person?

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How serious do you view hating someone?

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How serious is hatred to God? What are the consequences?

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Hate equals death. Therefore, we need to take the act of hatred seriously. It is easy to judge Cain and say I have never committed murder, I'm not evil, I do not hate. However, hatred is sneaky, it slips in through things like jealousy, self-centredness, impatience, etc. Love, on the other hand, equals life. Love conquered death through Jesus Christ's sacrificial love on the cross and raised us up in life through Jesus' resurrection.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 4: Changed DNA

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 3:12-15 and 1 John 4:20-21**

What is the nature of love?

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What is the nature of hate?

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Every person is designed with a DNA. DNA consists of two strands which are parallel to one another, but which run in opposite directions. Hate and love run parallel to one another but in opposite directions, opposing one another. The nature of hatred according to John is evil, it leads to death, whereas the nature of love is righteousness, self-sacrifice and leads to eternal life. God's "DNA" or nature is LOVE. That is why John says

God is love, it is His nature to love, and to give Eternal life. Does God hate?

**Read Proverbs 6:16-19**

What does God hate?

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God hates sin. He hates it because it is not in His nature to sin. That is why He destroyed sin through love. When we love Jesus and become His children, He gives us a new DNA, the DNA of love: love for Him and for others. That is why it is impossible to hate others if you are a child of God.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 5:**  
**How do we love like Jesus?**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 3:16-17 and John 3:16**

What similarities do you notice about John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16?

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How demanding is it to love someone like Jesus did?

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In what ways can we practically lay down our lives for others?

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Did you notice the similarity between John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16? Both are numbered the same and both talk about the sacrifice of Jesus.

We must be willing to die for others and put ourselves in jeopardy for the sake of others. We should allow surrender to entrench us as we commit ourselves to the church; surrender that which He has blessed you with for the sake of others.

**Read 1 John 4:12, 13 and 16**

How do we recognise that love is in us and we are in God?

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**Read 1 John 4:17-18**

Why is there no fear in love?

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Evidence is key to establishing if someone is a believer or not. Love through the Spirit is evidence of being a disciple.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



# GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

## Prayer

### Memory verse:

*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.*

*1 John 3:16 (NIV)*

### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

### Scripture Reading:

Read John 3:16, John 10:10, 1 John 3:16-17 and 1 John 4:7-11

## Discussion questions

What are some of the ways we hate each other?

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How do you know you have passed from death to life?

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How can we as a church, love those inside and outside the church?

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In what ways can we practically lay down our lives for others and the church?

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**Close in prayer**

# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **8**

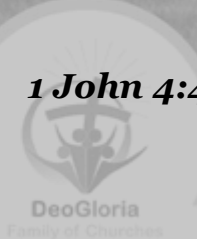
## The Spirit of Truth

**Memory verse:**

*You, dear children, are from God ... the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

*1 John 4:4 (NIV)*

JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING









# Day 1: A call to discernment

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 4:1-6**

How would you describe the meaning of the word "*discernment*"?

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Discernment is the ability to obtain sharp perceptions or to judge well. Discernment involves going past the mere perception of something. It is considered a virtue. A discerning individual is considered to possess wisdom and be of good judgement; especially so with regard to matters often overlooked by others.

**Read Proverbs 15:14 and Proverbs 18:15**

What do these verses teach us about discernment?

Proverbs 15:14	
Proverbs 18:15	

Jack Arnold said: “A *Christian must know how to believe and not believe at the same time; that means he must believe truth and reject error. This may sound contradictory, but it is like breathing. In breathing one must inhale as well as exhale. Both are absolutely necessary if life is to be maintained.*”

**Read Romans 12:2 and Philippians 1:9-10**

How can we cultivate the ability of discernment?

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Spiritual discernment is calling on the Holy Spirit to lead or give direction on a matter. It is how the Spirit shows the church or its people what God wants them to do and be.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2: Testing the spirits

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 4:1-3**

Why does John encourage us to “test the spirits”? How does John say we must “test the spirits?”

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How do you know a five-dollar note is false? You can only know it is false if you know what the original note looks like. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* Just because people say that we must follow Jesus and obey Him, is not a sign that they are of God.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to the genuineness of a believer. The evidence will be seen in the fruit of love. They will show sincere love to God and other people. The genuineness of our love and the genuineness of our belief about Christ are the evidence of God's work in our lives.

## Read 2 John 7-10

How are we to react to false prophets?

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Ray Stedman said; *"every Christian is also called to be an unbeliever. There is a time when unbelief is the right thing and the only right thing."* People sometimes say: *"It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe in something."* That is clearly the message of a false prophet. They say, *"if it works for you, it's okay."* God is not a projection of people's imaginations, He exists and He is the creator of everything.

There are two spiritual spheres coexisting in the world, one the domain of the Holy Spirit and the other the domain of the devil and they are opposing one another, with no possibility of compromise. God is light and Satan and his false prophets are from darkness.

Test all spirits, never swallow someone's line just because he or she uses terms of the Christian faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern whether a person is really being true to the Bible.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 3: The Spirit of Truth

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 4:4-6**

As believers we are born of God. We received new life from Him and became His children. This new life enables us to understand and to hold to the truth. With the new birth believers receive the Holy Spirit. He is greater than the devil, who is in the world and inspires false teachers. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we can overcome those who are of the world.

The presence of the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to discern false teaching and to overcome them. He helps us to overcome the world through God's Word, which reveals the truth about the person and work of Christ. The Word is the measure by which we test the spirits. To study God's Word regularly and earnestly will help us to overcome false teachers.

What are two characteristics we have learned about non-Christians in 1 John 4:5–6?

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The false teachers are from the world. The world is the evil system under the devil's control, that is opposed to God and His kingdom. This evil system of the world wants all the glory for itself. Steven Cole said: *“Any teaching that detracts from God’s glory and sovereignty and exalts man by feeding his pride is satanic at the core.”*

The people of the world tell other people about the things of the world and the world. Non-believers listen to them. When you tell the world what it wants to hear, you will have no problem drawing a crowd. False teachers tell people that they are wonderful and that God exists to help them fulfil their dreams and desires.

Why is it so important for us to discern, accept, and embrace teaching from godly teachers?

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All teachers are controlled, either by the Spirit of Christ or the spirit of Satan. We must discern one from the other so that our fellowship with God is not jeopardized.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 4: The Antichrist

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 4:1-6**

The Apostle John warned his readers four times about antichrists in his letter. What do you understand when you hear the word “antichrist”?

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The word antichrist means “against Christ.” The spirit of the antichrist teaches against Christ. To twist the truth about Jesus Christ is to pervert the gospel. Satan works to spread lies about Christ and keep people in the dark.

John taught that a prophet or teacher was the actual mouthpiece for a spirit. Spiritual doctrines are declared through human spokespersons. Teachers of truth are filled with the Spirit of God and thus are agents who speak for God.

**Read 1 Timothy 4:1**

What does this verse teach us about abandoning the Spirit of God? What doctrine do these false spirits spread?

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Read the following verses. In your own words, explain what the antichrist wants to do:

Mark 4:4,15	
John 8:43-44	
2 Corinthians 4:4	
Revelations 12:9	

The Bible teaches that the world will eventually produce a world ruler, called “the beast” in Revelation, who will wield great power and demand worship of himself. The same spirit that will empower the antichrist of the last days is currently operating in the world to bring confusion and deception to the issue of Jesus Christ’s person and work.

**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





**Day 5:**  
**He who is in you is greater!**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

Even given the pervasive influence of the spirit of the antichrist, there is no need to fear. As John reminds us, the Spirit of truth dwells in all believers and provides protection from the spirit of the antichrist.

**Read 1 John 4:1-6, Romans 8:31 and John 12:31**

What encouragement do we find in these verses?

Romans 8:31	
John 12:31	

Christians can be victorious over false teachers – because God is greater than the false teachers. It is not because Christians have superior intelligence, nor because they are aware of all the cults, nor that they have clever arguments, nor a superior theological training – it is the one who dwell in

them that delivers them. It is the greatness of God that keeps them on the right path. It is the fact that God is greater than the diabolical spirit that is at work behind the teachers of error.

**Read John 14:16-17**

How do believers know that they have the Spirit of God in them?

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When believers hear the truth of the gospel and put their faith in Christ, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit comes to dwell within them. Believers are unique in this aspect. There is no power greater than the Spirit of God that can destroy the work of the antichrist. This is the firm basis of Christian assurance:

... the One who is in you is greater!

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Prayer

#### Memory verse:

*You, dear children, are from God ... the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

*1 John 4:4 (NIV)*

#### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

#### Scripture Reading:

1 John 4:1-6, Romans 12:2 and Philippians 1:9-10

## Discussion questions

Why does John encourage us to test the spirits? How does this change the way we accept or reject teaching from others?

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Read 1 John 4:1-3 and identify the criteria John gives to “test the spirits”.

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Read 1 John 4:4. How can we, as Christians, overcome the doctrinal errors that continually confront us?

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Why is it so important for us to discern, accept and embrace teaching from godly teachers?

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**Close in prayer**

# JESUS CHANGES ME!

Week **9**

## Yes, I know!

**Memory verse:**

*I write ... 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 (NIV)**

**JESUS** CHANGES EVERYTHING



**DeoGloria**  
Family of Churches





**Day 1:**  
**Assurance that we belong to**  
**God**

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

When you watch sport programs on TV, you often find that they give replays when a team scores. They will show it from different angles, to make sure that the viewers have seen what happened.

In this chapter, much like the TV Sport programs, John repeats much of what he has said earlier in his letter, though from a slightly different perspective. Because of this repetition, people may feel it is unnecessary to read this passage. However, everything he says helps communicate his main concern throughout the letter; namely, that we be assured of our accepted status by God and that we enjoy the fullness of being His children.

**Read 1 John 5:1-5**

What does it mean to be “born of God”?

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In the first two verses, what “tests” does John give us to determine whether we are born of God?

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**Read 2 John 6 and Matthew 11:30**

John tells us that the commands of God are not burdensome. What does he mean by that? Do you find this to be true in your life?

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**Read John 16:33**

In an earlier study, we discovered that when John speaks of “the world”, he is referring to humankind in opposition to God and His ways. With that in mind, what does John mean when he talks about us overcoming the world? What would the life of one who “overcomes the world” look like?

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**End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 2:

# God's testimony about His Son

**JESUS** CHANGES EVERYTHING

Begin today's study with prayer.

**Read 1 John 5:6-12, John 14:17 and John 19:34**

The heretics of John's day said that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus at his baptism, but left before his death. How does the fact that Jesus Christ came by water (symbolizing His baptism) and blood (symbolizing His death) refute that heresy?

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**Read 1 John 5:6-9 and Matthew 18:16**

The Old Testament law required two or three witnesses to prove a claim. Who are John's witnesses and what do they testify?

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Why should we accept this threefold testimony concerning God's Son (Refer to verse 9)?

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**Read 1 John 5:10-12, Galatians 4:6 and John 3:33-34**

How does your own experience confirm the truth that eternal life is found only in God's Son?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



**Day 3:  
Certainty of Salvation**

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 5:13, 1 John 1:1-2, 20:31 and John 5:24**

Verse 13 is a summary statement of John's book. As you look back over the book as a whole, what are the things that assure us we have eternal life?

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Do you think it is important that we have assurance of salvation? Why?

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Are you sure about your own salvation? Explain your answer.

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How have the things referred to in verse 13 helped you gain a greater assurance of your own salvation?

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In these very uncertain times, with everything being temporary and dispensable, people will literally spend huge percentages of their money to cover all the potential contingencies – to try to provide some certainty in their lives. And there are other people who will pay large amounts of money to mediums, astrologers, fortune tellers to have some insight into the future, to remove some of the fearful uncertainty.

As believers we have the certainty that Salvation comes from the Lord. He is the only one that can save us from power and penalties of sin. If you believe in the Son of God, you believe Him to be who He said He was and believe Him to have done what He said He did, if you believe the gospel you may know that you now have eternal life.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 4: Certainty in Prayer

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 John 5:14-17, 1 John 3:21 and Matthew 7:7**

Assurance of our acceptance by God leads to confidence in prayer. How can we be assured that our prayers will be answered?

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What are the conditions given and how can we cultivate the ability to meet those conditions?

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**Read James 5:15**

1 John 5:16-17 describes the kind of prayer that can be offered with confidence. Considering this, what should we be praying for? And for whom?

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**Read Hebrews 10:26**

Considering the whole book, what might be the distinction between the sin that does not lead to death and the one that leads to death?

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When people deny that Jesus is the Saviour, that He came in the flesh and reject His atoning death and God's commands; they place themselves outside the sphere of forgiveness so that their sins become sins unto death.

**Read 2 Chronicles 7:14**

What encouragement do you find in this verse?

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**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**



## Day 5: Certain of what we know!

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

**Begin today's study with prayer.**

**Read 1 Peter 5:8 and 1 John 5:18-21**

In verses 18 – 20 John closes the book with a few encouraging truths and promises. Write these in your own words.

1 John 5:18	
1 John 5:19	
1 John 5:20	

In 1 Peter 5:8 Peter writes: *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

How do the promises in John 5:18-20 encourage us not to be afraid of Satan?

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How do we know that we belong to God's family and not to the world's family? (Refer to verse 19).

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**Read 1 John 5:20-21**

How does the coming of God's Son enable us to know the true God in contrast to the false conceptions of God that continually surround us?

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In the final verse John writes: "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols." Why do you think John closes with this verse? Do you think you have idols in your life?

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An idol is anything that occupies God's place; anything that drives your life and determines your behaviour; it is anything that you trust to make you happy. We need to be aware that it can happen to any believer!

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.**





## GROUP DISCUSSION

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Prayer

#### Memory verse:

*I write ... 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 (NIV)*

#### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

#### Scripture Reading:

1 John 5:1-21 and John 5:24

## Discussion questions

What is the most important teaching that you have learned from this book?

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Read 1 John 5. Discuss how you can use this book to help other people to be sure about their salvation.

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Read 1 John 5: 18-21. Notice the two uses of the word keep. What part does God play in keeping or guarding us? What part do we play in keeping ourselves?

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In the final verse John writes: “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.” Why do you think John closes with this verse? Do you think you have idols in your life? Discuss in the group.

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**Close in prayer**



## Memory Verses

**JESUS** CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

### Week 1

*..this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

*1 John 1:1b-2 (NIV)*

### Week 2

*... the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*1 John 1:7(c) (NIV)*

### Week 3

*But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

*1 John 2:5&6 (NIV)*

## **Week 4**

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*

*1 John 2:15 (NIV)*

## **Week 5**

*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.*

*1 John 4:2-3 (NIV)*

## **Week 6**

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

*1 John 3:1(a) (NIV)*

## **Week 7**

*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.*

*1 John 3:16 (NIV)*

## **Week 8**

*You, dear children, are from God ... the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

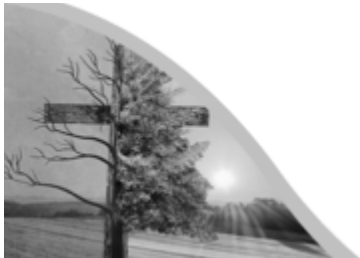
*1 John 4:4 (NIV)*

## **Week 9**

*I write ... 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 (NIV)*





## Resources

**JESUS** CHANGES  
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