



This is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.
-1 John 3:23

I. Introduction | *What is true love?*

II. Background to John's Epistles | *1 John 1:1-3*

- Apostolic authority
- Date and audience

III. Purpose of 1 John | *1 John 5:13*

- The false teachers (2:18-19)...
 - Claimed to be without sin (1:8)
 - Denied Jesus to be the Messiah in human flesh (2:22-23)
 - Denied Jesus' atoning death (5:6)
 - Had no love for Christians (2:11)
 - Had no concern for holiness (3:6-8)

IV. Outline of 1 John

Introduction: John Proclaims the Word of Life (1:1-4)

First Meditation on Assurance (1:5-2:14)

- Those who are in Christ walk in the light (1:5-7)
- Those who are in Christ are forgiven (1:8-2:2)
- Those who are in Christ obey his love command (2:3-11)
- Evidences of grace in John's audience (2:12-14)



Warning Against Following the World (2:15-27)

- Do not love the world (2:15-17)
- Do not listen to the world's message (2:18-27)

Second Meditation on Assurance (2:28-4:6)

- Those who are in Christ do what is right (2:28-3:10)
- Those who are in Christ love one another (3:11-23)
- Those who are in Christ have the Holy Spirit (3:24-4:6)

Exhortation to Love and Faith (4:7-5:12)

- Love like God loved you (4:7-5:4a)
- Have faith in the Christ who died (5:4b-12)

Concluding Remarks: Confidence in Approaching God (5:13-21)

V. John's Tests of Faith

A. Doctrinal Test | What is the content of our belief?

Key verses: 2:1-2, 2:22-23, 4:2-3, 4:15, 5:1

- Importance of right doctrine
- Danger of wrong belief
- Doctrine's effect on evangelism

B. Moral Test | What is the quality of our obedience?

Key verses: 1:5-7, 2:3-7, 2:15-17, 3:6-10, 5:18

- Stark teaching to convict our hearts
- *Not* teaching that "nice people are Christians"
- Do not love the world



C. Social Test | What is the character of our love?

Key verses: 2:8-10, 3:11-18, 4:7-21

- Loving Christians is an essential fruit of true faith
- Love in practical ways
- Love those who are difficult to love

VI. 2 John

Key Theme | Christians should not support those who are false teachers (2 John 7, 10-11).

- Difference in how we respond to false teachers that claim the name of Christ and ordinary non-Christians
- Our responsibility to ensure those we support in ministry are faithful to the truth
- Applying 2 John's warning today

VII. 3 John

Key Theme | Christians should extend hospitality to those laboring for the sake of the Gospel (3 John 5-8 vs. 3 John 9-11).

- Diotrephes – loves to be first (v. 9)
- Gaius – loves “the brothers” (v. 6)
- Hospitality to Gospel workers = working together with them in the same mission (v. 8)

VIII. Conclusion: *What is true love?*

- 1 John = Instructions on true love
- 2 John = Warning against false love
- 3 John = Gaius, an example of true love