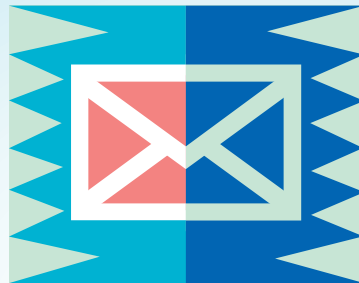


New Testament Survey

Love in Action

Studying Jude and
1, 2 and 3 John



For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

11

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Love in Action

Jude and 1, 2 and 3 John



LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Fight for the faith
 - A. Exploring Jude
 - B. Establishing the Historical Background
 - C. Examining the Text
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse
 - 3. Topics and Teachings
 - 4. Jude: Jesus Christ, Our Keeper
- III. Love and Obedience
 - A. Exploring 1 John
 - B. Establishing the Historical Background
 - 1. Authorship and Audience
 - 2. Geography
 - 3. Date
 - C. Examining the Text
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse
 - 3. Topics and Teachings
 - 4. 1 John: Jesus Christ, Our Life
- IV. Walk in Truth
 - A. Exploring 2 John
 - B. Establishing the Historical Background
 - C. Examining the Text
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse

3. Topics and Teachings
 4. 2 John: Jesus Christ, the Truth
- V. A personal letter
- A. Exploring 3 John
 - B. Establishing the Historical Background
 - C. Examining the Text
 1. Theme
 2. Key Verse
 3. Topics and Teachings
 4. 3 John: Jesus Christ, the Way
- VI. Conclusion

Self Test

Appendix. Let's Look At 1, 2, 3 John And Jude

LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson you should:

1. Have a renewed appreciation for Jude, 1, 2 and 3 John.
2. Know the author, audience, basic outline, key verse, and primary themes of these books.
3. Be able to share one new thing that you have learned about each of these books from this study.
4. Reevaluate love and discipline in your Christian life and in your church.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Work through the lesson.
2. Read through Jude, and 1, 2 and 3 John as you are instructed to in this lesson.
3. Read the appendix, an excerpt from *A Look at the New Testament* by Dr. Henrietta Mears.
4. Complete the Practical Assignment.

WORD STUDY

Apostasy—turning away from or abandoning something which you have believed, particularly turning away from one's religion

Domitian—Roman emperor who ruled from A.D. 81-96, he was known for his cruelty and hatred of Christians

I. Introduction

In this lesson we will be covering four small letters. Sometimes we overlook some of these smaller books, and we definitely don't hear about them as frequently simply because they have less content to draw from for sermons or teaching. However each book has been included in the Bible to further our understanding of the Christian walk, sometimes by confirming what has been written other places and sometimes by including some new nuggets of teaching or understanding or example.

This lesson consist of questions, exercises and projects that will help you to dig into these epistles, opening up your understanding to the context in which they were written, and helping you to interact with God's Word. There are answers in the workbook to help you if you get stuck. In addition there is a self test included so that you can review what you have learned.

You need to have a Bible or New Testament which you will feel free to mark up as you will be required to make many markings. When you read, always keep a pen beside you so that you can mark whenever you find something particularly important to you. You will also need a personal notebook for written assignments. In addition there is a supplement, *New Testament Geography and Chronology*, which you must have to complete some of the exercises. If you did not receive one, please ask your leader.

You can do this study on your own, but it will be much more beneficial if you meet with a group and discuss what you are learning and discovering. We are meant to help and encourage and share with each other. It gives all of us more insights and greater joy. And then there is the issue of accountability. So often we have good intentions, but... Life is full and we easily lay aside a study, and then it gets buried. We need to spur each other on! Knowing that you are going to meet with a group often provides that extra incentive to dig in and learn. And every moment spent in the Word of God will build truth into your life and faith in your heart.

II. Fight for the faith

Jude is one of those little books of the Bible but also one of the most controversial. The author of Jude quoted from a non-canonical book titled the “Book of Enoch” and this has led many to argue that the epistle of Jude should also not be canonical. However, the church fathers accepted it as the inspired word of God and history proves how much we need the message of this book. This little letter urges us to beware of false teachers and to fight for God’s truth. Although only 25 verses long Jude grabs our attention with its forceful language and direct warnings and exhortations.

A. Exploring Jude

As with most books there are many ways to outline them. Study resources often include outlines of the books of the Bible and these outlines range from simple to extremely complex. The outline that we have included here for Jude is very simple, but reminds us clearly of the main teachings and focus of this epistle.

Outline of Jude	
Greeting	1–2
I. The Danger of False Teachers	3–16
II. The Duty to Fight for God’s Truth	17–23
Benediction	24–25

Refer to this outline as you read through Jude and answer the following questions.



Question 1 How does the author identify himself in verse one?

What a beautiful and humble way to begin this letter! We do not have very much information about Jude, but church tradition tells us that this Jude was one of the brothers of Jesus. Although there is no conclusive way to prove this, there is also no evidence to the contrary.



Question 2 To whom is it addressed?

The whole tone of this letter is one of love despite the strongly worded teaching that it contains. Jude obviously felt very deeply for the people that he was writing to.

The same holds true for the audience as for the author in that there are no strong clues in the text about whom the readers of Jude were. While some people see this as a disadvantage to understanding the letter we do know that it was addressed to Christians in general and we should do our best to apply its truths to our lives now just as the Christians of Jude's time would have done.



Question 3 What was the author's intended subject for the letter?



Question 4 What did he end up writing about instead?

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that Jude is such a little book it is thoroughly interwoven with the rest of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. Jensen gives us this chart which summarizes Jude's references to other Scriptures:¹

Jude	Event Referred To
v. 5 Israelites	Num. 12-14 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:5-10)
v. 6 fallen angels	cf. 2 Pet. 2:4
v. 7 Sodom and Gomorrah	Gen. 18-19
v. 11 Cain	Gen. 4
v. 11 Balaam	Num. 22-24
v. 11 Korah	Num. 16
v. 14 Enoch	cf. Gen. 5:18-24

You may find it an interesting study to look up and compare Jude's comments with the other Scripture passages. It is always important for Christians to recognize that the Bible is a whole and cannot just be taken one piece at a time. If we are to truly understand Jude we must place it in the larger context of the whole Bible by researching these references.

B. Establishing the Historical Background

There is not a lot of historical background to the writing of Jude and some of it has been covered already. We know who the author is and that the audience cannot be identified geographically. The last piece of background information that we have to deal with is the date of Jude.

Because of the lack of background information about Jude and the controversy surrounding its canonicity there has been some debate about when it was written. Despite this we do have some evidence in the text: it appears that Jude 17-18 quotes 2 Peter 3:3, which might indicate that Jude was written after Peter's epistles. It is also likely that Jude was written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.



Question 5 Refer to the chronology chart in the supplement, *New Testament Geography and Chronology* to discover when Peter's epistles were written. Based on this information and the information above, when might Jude have been written?

¹ Jensen I. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. — Chicago: Moody Press, 1981. — P. 485.

Keep in mind, however, that like with many Bible books there is no accurate way to set this date and Jude may have been written much earlier or even later.

C. Examining the Text

Even though Jude is a small book it is still important to draw out the key elements like the theme, key verse and an outline. This is helpful because it makes the information easier to bring to mind when a situation calls for it.

1. Theme

The theme of Jude is easy to identify since we only have one chapter to look at:

Christians need to fight to keep their faith pure and unblemished by ungodly impostors.

This is certainly not a foreign concept to most Christians. We've actually seen it in several of Paul's epistles and Hebrews. The primary difference is that Jude's warning is not against Judaizers who were adding rules to Christianity, but rather against those who turn God's grace into an excuse for indulging in immoralities.

2. Key Verse

Following the theme that is stated above there are two verses that stand out as key verses for the book of Jude. The first is Jude 3b, "I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." Jude states his theme himself in this verse. The second verse that summarizes the teaching of Jude is verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

Both of these verses could be considered the key verse for the epistle, however we have chosen Jude 3b as the key verse because it is a direct statement of Jude's intent in writing the letter.



Question 6 Write the second half of verse 3 here:

3. Topics and Teachings

Read Jude again while you complete the following exercise.



Exercise 1

Mark key words in Jude. Take time to mark the following words as you read:

Purple -- "Ungodly"

Red -- "Judgment"

Brown -- "Beloved"

As you can see from completing the above exercise Jude loved the people to whom he was writing. It was certainly this love that caused him to write such strong words.

False Teachers

Let's look at how Jude describes the false teachers who were troubling the church he was writing to. You will find this passage very similar to 2 Peter 2:4-17.



Question 7 After each verse indicated write the characteristics of these people which are listed in that verse.

Verse 4 _____

Verse 8 _____

Verse 10 _____

Verse 16 _____

Verse 19 _____

This gives you an idea of signs to look for. Unfortunately these people creep in unnoticed as we are told in verse 4, and it is only over time they reveal themselves fully. Their appeal is to our flesh, and their success.

And how does Jude suggest we “fight” these people? We are to build ourselves up in our faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping ourselves in God’s love, depending on the mercy of Jesus Christ to bring us to eternal life.

Beyond that we need to help those who are influenced by wrong teaching, or even their own struggles. We are admonished to handle doubters gently, with mercy, and to take action to save people.

4. Jude: Jesus Christ, Our Keeper

Mears does not cover Jude except to give the title “Our Keeper” to Jesus.

Food for Thought

Read Jude 22 and 23. It is easy to be judgmental of others, but we have responsibility to those around us. Think about these questions in relation to yourself:

- 1) How are we to deal with people who are having doubts?
- 2) How do you feel about people who doubt?
- 3) How have you helped people in the past with doubts?
- 4) Do you see those around you who are in danger of the fire of judgment?
- 5) What is your responsibility to them?
- 6) How can you mix mercy and fear?



Question 8 What verse uses this characteristic of Christ?

Even though Jude focuses on the dangers around us, how beautiful that the final note is on God and His keeping power in our lives. The last two verses are a beautiful benediction that assure us of God’s might and turn our focus back to Him instead of the problems, as our hearts should always do when faced with difficulties.

III. Love and Obedience

First John is a popular book for teaching and preaching. The message of love that is contained therein is important for Christians to hear. Not only that but much of the book is full of gems for memorization; in *Basic Christian Life* at least four of the verses that you memorized came from 1 John. Can you remember them?

A. Exploring 1 John

Before you go further in your study of 1 John, don't forget to spend a few moments in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to show you new things as you study this text today.

Take 20-25 minutes right now to read through 1 John uninterrupted. As you read try to keep in mind the large picture of the book as you look for the words listed in the following exercise.



Exercise 2

Mark key words in 1 John. As you read mark these words in your Bible:

Red -- "Know, -s"

Blue -- "Father"

Brown -- "Children"

Follow this outline as you read and mark:

Outline of 1 John	
I. God is Light	(1:1–2:27)
II. God is Love	(2:28–4:21)
III. God is Life	(5:1–21)

B. Establishing the Historical Background

Next to Paul John wrote the most books in the New Testament and so it is not too difficult to find background information about John himself or his writings. Not only that but John also lived longer than most or all of the other apostles which has also helped to keep the historical information about him intact. John's latter years were spent in Ephesus and it is probable that he wrote his gospel and all three of his epistles from that city.²

1. Authorship and Audience

Because 1, 2, and 3 John were all written by the same author we will deal with their authorship and audience in this section rather than under the individual books.

Although it is not expressly stated in any of the three epistles or the gospel bearing his name, church tradition as well as internal evidence lead us to believe that the apostle John wrote 1, 2, and 3 John as well as his gospel. We know that John wrote the Revelation because he identifies himself in the opening verses.

There is no salutation or other greeting in 1 John, however, in the other two epistles there is. Answer the following questions by looking up the related passages.



Question 9 How does John identify himself in these epistles?

2 John 1 _____

3 John 1 _____

You probably noticed that 1 John does not name an audience. One author writes, "The readers of 1 John were probably a congregation or group of congregations of Asia Minor closely associated with the apostle."³ We know that John remained in Jerusalem for many years after the death

² *The Woman's Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 2091.

³ Jensen I. *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. — Chicago: Moody Press, 1981. — P. 467.

of Christ (see Acts 1:13, 3:1-11, 4:13-20, 8:14 and Galatians 2:9). From the passage in Galatians we know that John had met Paul. Church tradition tells us that John relocated to Ephesus around A.D. 68, shortly before the fall of Jerusalem, and spent most of the latter years of his life there.



Question 10 To whom is 2 John addressed?

2 John 1 _____

There is no information about who the “elect lady and her children” were, but there is plenty of speculation. The two most common theories are 1) that the epistle was sent to a nearby town and that the “elect lady and her children” are the churches in that area; 2) that the epistle was addressed to a female head of household who hosted a church in her home. Both of these are viable options and the end of both was that the letter would have been read in the local church and shared with neighboring congregations.



Question 11 To whom is 3 John addressed?

3 John 1 _____

Third John is a more personal letter from a well-known and respected leader to his dear friend. It appears that Gaius was a Jew (3 John 7) and also a convert under John’s ministry (3 John 4). It is not clear from the letter whether Gaius hosted a church in his home, however he did show hospitality to some other traveling Christians and John commends him for this (3 John 5, 8). Most likely he was also a leader in his local church.

2. Geography

We have already learned a little about the city of Ephesus in Lesson 6. We know that Ephesus was located in a key place for the spread of the gospel throughout Asia Minor and that there was also significant opposition to the gospel there during Paul’s travels because of the silversmith, Demetrius. Apparently, by the time John moved there some 15-20 years later the opposition had calmed down and he was able to conduct his affairs in peace until the Roman emperor Domitian came to power. We will learn more about that in the next lesson.



Exercise 3

Locate Ephesus on a map. Turn to the Map 2 in the supplement, *New Testament Geography and Chronology* and locate Ephesus on it. Notice how far it is located from Jerusalem. Now look at Asia Minor as a whole. Keeping in mind that John’s epistles were most likely written to churches in this area draw lines from Ephesus to the five closest cities.

John’s epistles were most likely sent to churches in these cities and his gospel and the Revelation would also have been read there first.

3. Date



Question 12 Refer to the supplement and write out the date for John’s gospel on the line below.

In *Jensen’s Survey of the New Testament* Jensen tells us that 1 John was written between A.D. 85 and 90.⁴ It is generally believed that all three of John’s epistles were written during this time period shortly after he wrote his gospel and before he wrote Revelation.

⁴ Ibid., p. 466.



Exercise 4

Note the Johannine epistles on the dateline. In the chronology chart in the supplement write in "1, 2, 3 John beside the appropriate date.

The historical background surrounding the Johannine epistles is fascinating and if you have the time and resources you may want to study it in depth. We have only been able to give you a snapshot. However, if you do not have the opportunity to do further study in this area you may be confident that you can interpret the text of 1 John just fine without any knowledge of the historical background.

C. Examining the Text

We will now return to our focus on 1 John and will deal with the texts of 2 and 3 John as we come to them later in the lesson.

1. Theme

We do not know exactly who John was writing to in his first epistle, but we do know that he was writing to refute some of the heresies that were springing up as well as to encourage the believers in their existing faith. John states several purposes for writing.



Question 13 Look up each of the following verses and write briefly beside it John's stated purpose. In each verse John gives one of his reasons for writing. State his purposes in your own words on the lines below.

- 1:4 _____
- 2:1 _____
- 2:26 _____
- 5:13 _____

So we know that John had more than one reason in writing.

One way of stating the theme of 1 John is:

God's light in the Christian's life results in a heart attitude of love and obedience.

Actually, as with many of these books, there are several themes masterfully intertwined. You cannot help but notice as you read that the word *love* is used over and over. We did not have you mark it, but you may want to do so on your own. The tone of this whole letter is full of love. And the possibility of a Christian harboring either sin or hatred in his heart will break his relationship with God and his fellow man.

2. Key Verse

It is difficult to choose one verse in 1 John that encapsulates the whole epistle. Based on the theme as stated above we have chosen 1 John 2:5 as the summary verse for this epistle. It says:

Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.

**Food for Thought
Contrasts in 1 John**

- Light and darkness
1:6-7; 2:8-11
- Love of the world and love of God
2:15-17
- Children of God and children of the devil
3:4-10
- Spirit of God and spirit of Anti-Christ
4:1-3
- Love and Hate
4:7-12, 16-21

Notice how this verse expresses the ideas of love and salvation which both flow throughout John's writings.

3. Topics and Teachings

A good reminder from a famous pastor and expositor:

First John is the book which I used when I began my ministry in a new church. (I didn't at the first church I served because I was a seminary student and didn't know enough to begin in the right place.) But in the four churches I served during my forty years of pastoring, I began the midweek service with a study in 1 John. I am convinced that this epistle is more important for believers in the church than the church epistles. When we moved into this wonderful book, I saw the midweek service attendance increase. We saw a phenomenal increase in attendance in the last two churches I served. During the time we studied this little epistle the attendance doubled, doubled again, and then doubled again, so that we had as many people in attendance at the midweek service as we had in the Sunday evening service. Sometimes the midweek service would surpass the Sunday night service. My friend, it is very important to understand this little book.⁵

First John is often thought of as the epistle on love. While this is certainly an important topic, there are other themes in this epistle that deserve our attention and study as well.

God is Light



Question 14 Look up the following verses which speak of "Light" and summarize what you learn. 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:8, 9, 10

God is Love

This is a direct statement in 1 John 4:8, and the theme of love is carried on throughout. But it is based upon the fact that God Himself is love. If you want to see what else John has to say on this topic now would be a good time to mark the word *love* in your Bible. You will find it over 30 times. God's love is also displayed in the emphasis of God as Father and us as His children.

Assurance of Salvation

You have marked the word "know" in your Bible and at some point you will want to look and see what all is covered, but one of the emphases is knowing for certain that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13

4. 1 John: Jesus Christ, Our Life

The following questions are based on the section on the appendix. Note how Mears' teaching compliments the information that we have just covered under "Topics and Teachings".



Exercise 5

Take John's test. First, underline in your Bible the seven verses which Mears mentions. Now ask each of these test questions to yourself. Write your answers in your notebook and be prepared to show your course coach that you completed this assignment at the next group meeting.

⁵ McGee, J. V. *Thru the Bible Commentary* // Vol. 56: 1 John. — Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991. — P. 8.



Question 15 Mears writes that sin separates us from two groups. Who are they?



Question 16 God will reveal to us the sins in our life; what is our responsibility?



Question 17 How should we confess our sins?



Question 18 After confessing our sins, what do we need to do?

One way to acknowledge forgiveness of sins is to pray and thank God specifically for His forgiveness.



Question 19 What are the three attitudes that we can have towards others? Which is predominant in your life?



Question 20 How can we tell if we are fellowshiping with God?



Question 21 What rewards of a life in Christ are stated in 1 John 5?

IV. Walk in Truth

Second John is the shortest book in the Bible with only thirteen verses. It is easy to skip over this letter because it is so short and because of its similarities in teaching with 1 John. However, it is precisely because of these similarities that we should pay close attention to this letter and the one that follows it; in them John distills his teaching into just a few paragraphs.

A. Exploring 2 John

Now read 2 John. Follow the outline below as you read. Even though this is a short book, don't hurry through the reading. Rather, take your time praying and thinking about what John was writing and why.

Outline of 2 John	
Greeting	vs. 1–3
I. Walk in Christ's Commandments	vs. 4–6
II. Warning Against False Teachers	vs. 7–11
Conclusion	vs. 12–13

B. Establishing the Historical Background

As mentioned in the section on 1 John, 2 John is believed to have been written by John, the disciple of Jesus. Second John is addressed to “the elect lady and her children”. It is possible that this term is a personification of a local congregation, which would indicate that the reference to “your elect sister” in verse 13 refers to another church. It is equally possible that John was actually writing to a specific woman and her family.



Question 22 Do you think that this epistle was written to an individual or to a church?

Regardless of whether the letter was written to an individual or an entire congregation it was certainly read in the local congregation. Letters like this were too precious not to share with others.

We really have very little information about this epistle. Because it is so short it is difficult to identify the exact circumstances of writing or reading. As mentioned above it was most likely written around A.D. 90 from Ephesus and was sent to a church not too far distant in Asia Minor.

C. Examining the Text

It seems almost impractical to assign a theme and key verse to such a small book and yet there is a very specific point to John’s writing in this letter and by identifying it now it will help us to remember the teaching contained in 2 John later.

1. Theme

It is easy to identify the key words of 2 John. Love and truth are the two words that jump out of the text as the main themes of John’s writing.



Exercise 6

Mark key words in 2 John. Read through 2 John a second time marking the words “love” in purple and “truth” and “teaching” (which are closely related) in red as you go.

Although “truth” is mentioned primarily in the first few verses the theme continues throughout with John warning his readers about deceivers and false teachers. He urges them to continue keeping the truth which they were first taught. So the theme may be stated as:

Abiding in the truth is the basis of walking in love.

Every Christian must always go back to the Bible to examine every teaching and to live by those teachings.

2. Key Verse



Question 23 With the above theme in mind write out verse 9 as a key verse:

3. Topics and Teachings

Love

John continues his emphasis on love. Our love of God compels us to obey Him and our obedience must be expressed through our love for others.

False Teachers

The primary issue in this letter is those who did not believe in the incarnation of Christ—one of the truths on which our faith is based. Then there is a warning not to give hospitality to these people. In other words, we are not to embrace them as we would fellow Christians.

4. 2 John: Jesus Christ, the Truth

Jesus Christ proclaimed Himself to be the “truth”. The more we abide in Him the more immersed in truth we will be. Learn truth, speak truth, but above all live truth.

Food for Thought

Do you know of a “false teacher”? Maybe someone in your church who is going in a wrong direction, twisting Scripture. What do we do to teach the truth to these people? How are we allowing our curiosity to affect it? How do we show love while standing for truth?

V. A personal letter

Now we come to the third epistle attributed to the Apostle John. This little book has been called the “twin” of 2 John.



Question 24 Fill in the blanks below with the proper reference from both 2 and 3 John showing their similarities.

There are some significant similarities worth noting:

(1) The author describes himself as “the elder”.

(2) The recipients are those whom he loves “in truth”.

(3) The recipients are the occasion of great rejoicing “I was very glad”.

(4) The recipients are “walking in the truth”.

(5) The elder has received good reports about both.

(6) Both letters contain a warning.

(7) The elder desires to see both face to face.

(8) Others sent their greetings.⁶

⁶ Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, Gen. Eds. *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 940.

Obviously the books are not identical, but are similar enough in content to know that they were written by the same author probably at the same time. It is quite possible that John wrote these letters before a “pastoral visit” to these churches under his care. If that is the case there were probably many such letters which God did not see fit to include in the New Testament.

A. Exploring 3 John

Although similar to 2 John, 3 John is not merely a slightly changed copy. It was written specifically to Gaius with a definite purpose in mind. The encouragement given in this epistle is distinctly different from that given in 2 John.

Take time now to read it again and discover this book for yourself. It will only take a few minutes to read and you may want to read it a third time noting the divisions in the outline below.

Outline of 3 John	
Greeting	verse 1
I. Hospitality in the Church	verses 2–8
II. Abuse of Authority	verses 9–11
Conclusion with Commendation	verses 12–15



Exercise 7

Read and mark 3 John. As you notice these key words mark them in the indicated color.

Purple -- “Love”

Red -- “Truth”

Orange -- “Good”

B. Establishing the Historical Background

We have already looked at the historical background of this letter and know that the apostle John was writing from Ephesus to his friend Gaius who lived in another nearby city.



Question 25 According to the information presented earlier in this lesson, when was 3 John most likely written?

There are three men mentioned in this book besides the author. We have no information about them except what we have here. Gaius was a common name of that time, and this name is mentioned other places in the New Testament but there is no indication that they refer to “this” Gaius. Possibly he was a convert of John’s.

Diotrephes is not mentioned anywhere else. He obviously is a man full of himself, rather than of love and the Jesus Christ of that love.

Demetrius again is not related to any other passage. It is not known if he was a member of that local congregation, or if he had been sent there, possibly even delivering this letter. But we know that he was a man with an exemplary testimony with one and all.

C. Examining the Text

With a short book like 3 John it is easy to impose our own preconceived ideas on it. Because it is not a long book the theme is not developed at length and so it is easy to mistake the repetition of certain words as an indication of the actual theme or to superimpose John’s previous writings onto

this work as well. Hopefully you will find that this study does neither of those and rather presents a fresh view of the epistle to you.

1. Theme

If you refer to your marking exercise above you will note that the key words for 3 John are also key words in some of his other writings. However if you read the book carefully you will no doubt have noticed that John focuses on the issue of Christian hospitality. You might state his theme like this:

Hospitality to believers lets us share in their work.

John refers repeatedly to love and truth in 3 John and it is obvious that he is referring to his friends' relationship with God. "Truth" and "love" are favorite expressions of John's and, as we have observed, are seen not just in this epistle but also in 1 and 2 John and the gospel of John both as key words and as themes. This little letter gives us a practical outcome of both truth and love expressed in hospitality.

2. Key Verse



Question 26 Write out 3 John 8 as a key verse.



Question 27 What kind of men is it we are to support?

Look at Jesus' words from Matthew 10:41. "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." So this is not a new principle that John was introducing but rather an application of what Jesus had taught His disciples.

3. Topics and Teachings

We have covered the topic of hospitality. There are no other openly stated teachings but we will address a couple of minor issues that enter in.

Faithfulness

Gaius, whom we know little about, was commended because he was faithful in his walk with God and expression of his Christian faith which we know for sure extended to hospitality of strangers. He most likely was one of the leaders in the church.

Pride

Diotrephes on the other hand is shown to us as a controlling leader, resisting the authority of the Apostle John and the truth. His own sense of righteousness even caused him to throw people out of the church—because they offered hospitality.

4. 3 John: Jesus Christ, the Way

Jesus showed us the way to walk in our Christian life—and He IS the Way! Let us seek His ways as did Gaius and Demetrius.

Food for Thought

We have a little picture of a power struggle in the early church. Think about the contrast between Gaius and Diotrephes. As you consider these men, as well as the testimony about Demetrius, what might be written in a letter about you? What do people see in your life? Do you spur others on to good works, or do you stand in their way? Are you willing to submit to a higher spiritual authority than yours? What do you say about authorities above you?

VI. Conclusion

Even though there is a large time gap in between the writing of Jude and the Johannine epistles we see that the church was still struggling with the same issues in 1, 2 and 3 John as they were in Jude. During the early days of the church there were many false teachers who were trying to come in and pervert the truth in one way or another. Indeed we still struggle with this issue today. There are always charlatans who are trying to turn the gospel to their own profit. Some of them come in as “wolves in sheep’s clothing”, changing small parts, but even changing a small part of the gospel can send people to hell, just like turning the wheel of a car just a fraction can send it off the road. Other false teachers come in blatantly and use their charm and personal charisma to delude and defraud innocent people. Thus the warnings that we have in these four books need to be taken carefully and seriously. We need to look not only to our own lives and make sure we are not leading others astray, but we need to be constantly checking the teaching of others against the Truth of God, the Bible, to make sure that they are also staying accurate and true in their message.



Practical Assignment: Lead a Bible Study Lesson

Using what you have learned in this lesson and any additional studying you can do, lead a Bible study lesson on Jude, 1, 2, or 3 John. In order to receive credit for this assignment you will need to write out your lesson plan in your notebook and get it signed by at least two people who participated in the lesson. You are required to include a practical application for your small group to carry out during the next week!

If you have enjoyed this lesson please note that it is one in a series of 12 lessons which cover the epistles of the New Testament and the Revelation. These lessons do not necessarily need to be done in order but we would encourage you to pursue your study of the scriptures both for your personal spiritual growth and so that you will be prepared to help others.

Other lessons are:

Lesson 1—James and Galatians — *The Truth about Faith*

Lesson 2—1 and 2 Thessalonians — *Standing Firm in Persecution*

Lesson 3—1 Corinthians — *Problems of the Church*

Lesson 4—2 Corinthians — *Ministry Defended*

Lesson 5—Romans — *Righteousness by Faith*

Lesson 6—Colossians and Ephesians — *Christ and His Church*

Lesson 7—Philemon and Philippians — *Joy and Forgiveness*

Lesson 8—1 Timothy and Titus — *Church Leadership*

Lesson 9—1 Peter, 2 Timothy & 2 Peter — *Encouragement and Warnings*

Lesson 10—Hebrews — *The New Covenant*

Lesson 12—The Revelation — *Climax of the Ages*

Self Test

Score:___/100

Matching (4 points each, ___/64)

Match the book with the information.

- a. Jude
- b. 1 John
- c. 2 John
- d. 3 John

1. ___ Theme: Hospitality of believers lets us share in their work.
2. ___ Theme: Christians need to fight to keep their faith pure and unblemished by ungodly impostors.
3. ___ Key verse: I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.
4. ___ Jesus Christ, Our Life
5. ___ Key verse: Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.
6. ___

Greeting
I. Walk in Christ's Commandments
II. Warning Against False Teachers
Conclusion

7. ___

Greeting
I. Hospitality in the Church
II. Abuse of Authority
Conclusion with Commendation

8. ___ Jesus Christ, Our Keeper
9. ___ Jesus Christ, the Way
10. ___ Theme: Live your life according to the Truth taught by Christ.
11. ___ Key Verse: Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.
12. ___

Greeting
I. The Danger of False Teachers
II. The Duty to Fight for God's Truth
Benediction

13. ___ Jesus Christ, the Truth

14. ___ Key verse: Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.
By this we know that we are in Him.
15. ___ Theme: Walk in obedience and love.
16. ___

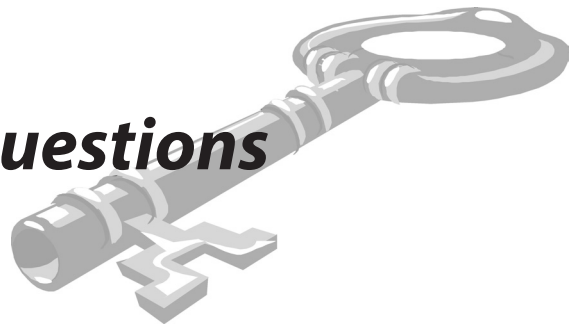
- I. God is Light
- II. God is Love
- III. God is Life

Fill in the Blanks (3 points each answer, ___/36)

Fill in the missing information.

1. John was the author of _____ of the books covered in this lesson.
2. _____ authored the other book.
3. John wrote his epistles from _____.
4. “False Teachers” is a topic that is addressed in _____ and _____.
5. _____ was written around A.D. 70.
6. First, 2 and 3 John were written around A.D. _____.
7. Fellowship is an important topic in _____.
8. Jude was most likely a brother of _____.
9. The _____ epistle of John is addressed to “the elect lady and her children”.
10. John’s letters were probably all sent to churches located in the Roman province of _____.
11. John’s third letter is addressed to _____.

Answers to Questions



Question 1

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.

Question 2

He addressed the letter: “to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.”

Question 3

He had intended to write about salvation. (v. 3)

Question 4

He wrote to encourage the believers to stand strong and live out their faith and to warn them about false teachers who had come among them.

Question 5

Jude may have been written in A.D. 68 or 69.

Question 6

See Jude 3b in your Bible.

Question 7

Verse 4—Ungodly men—worldly

Turn the grace of God into licentiousness—carnal

Deny Jesus Christ—skeptical

Verse 8—defile the flesh (presumably referring to the example of Sodom and Gomorrah)

Reject authority

Reville angelic majesties (without respect and lawless)

Verse 10—revile what they don’t understand

Verse 16—grumblers

Find fault

Follow their own lusts

Speak arrogantly

Flatter

Verse 19--Cause divisions

Worldly minded

Devoid of the Spirit

Question 8

Verse 24.

Question 9

The elder.

Question 10

The chosen lady and her children.

Question 11

Gaius.

Question 12

Please refer to the chronology chart in the supplement to answer this question.

Question 13

1:4 He wrote so that their joy would be complete (with the knowledge gained from what he wrote).

2:1 He wrote so they would not sin.

2:26 He wanted to write about those who were trying to deceive them.

5:13 He wrote so that believers could be assured that they had eternal life.

Question 14

Your answer. The contrast between Light and darkness is strong. It is important to see and understand that when “light” is spoken of in these verses, it is referring to God Himself as that light.

Question 15

Sin separates us from both God and man.

Question 16

Our responsibility is to admit the sin which God reveals to us and confess it.

Question 17

We should confess them by name before God.

Question 18

We need to step out, accepting God’s promise, not waiting to *feel* like we have been forgiven.

Question 19

We can hate, be indifferent to or love others.

Your answer.

Question 20

If I am fellowshiping with God I will have love in my life for others.

Question 21

We have assurance of eternal life, the power of prayer and intercession, and victory.

Question 22

Your answer.

Question 23

See 2 John 9 in your Bible.

Question 24

- (1) 2 John 1; 3 John 1
- (2) 2 John 1; 3 John 1
- (3) 2 John 4; 3 John 3
- (4) 2 John 4; 3 John 3
- (5) 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 5
- (6) 2 John 8; 3 John 9-11
- (7) 2 John 12; 3 John 14
- (8) 2 John 13; 3 John 14

Question 25

Third John was most likely written in between A.D. 85 and 90 at the same time as 2 John.

Question 26

See 3 John 8 in your Bible.

Question 27

According to the whole passage it was talking about men who were like traveling preachers.

Answers to Exercises



Exercise 1

“Ungodly” occurs six times in Jude.

“Judgment” occurs three times.

“Beloved” occurs four times.

Exercise 2

“Know, -s” occurs 40 times in 1 John.

“Father” occurs 13 times.

“Children” occurs 14 times.

Exercise 3

Your answer. You should have lines drawn from Ephesus to Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Miletus.

Exercise 4

Your answer.

Exercise 5

Your answer.

Exercise 6

“Love” occurs four times.

“Truth” occurs five times.

“Teaching” occurs three times.

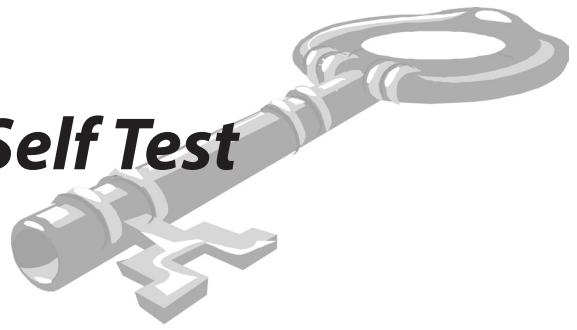
Exercise 7

“Love” occurs three times in 3 John.

“Truth” occurs five times.

“Good” occurs four times.

Answers to Self Test



Matching

1. d.
2. a.
3. a.
4. b.
5. c.
6. c.
7. d.
8. a.
9. d.
10. c.
11. d.
12. a.
13. c.
14. b.
15. b.
16. b.

Fill in the Blanks

1. three
2. Jude
3. Ephesus
4. Jude, 2 John
5. Jude
6. 85-90
7. 1 John
8. Jesus
9. second
10. Asia Minor
11. Gaius

Let's Look at 1, 2, 3 John and Jude

*Jesus Christ: Our Life; The Truth; The Way;
Our Keeper*

Chapter 23 from *A Look at the New Testament* by Henrietta Mears⁷

1 JOHN

Right Behavior

(Read 1 John 1:1-3:24)

John gives us seven tests of Christian behavior. Read these and find what your “rating” is as a Christian. They are easy to find because each of these tests is introduced by “if we say” or “he that saith.” The test is this—“If we say” one thing, and do another, we are not living as Christ would want us to, in full fellowship with Himself. How much easier it is to talk than it is to do. As Moody said, “We talk cream and live skim milk.”

Test One -- Walk In The Light

If we say that we have fellowship with Him [the God of light] and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth (1:6). Here is the first, “if we say.” Have you underlined it?

⁷ Used by permission.

Is there known sin in your life? If there is, you are not walking with Christ. His presence throws light on your conscience and heart and shows the presence of sin in the life (Eph. 5:13). A Christian who is walking in fellowship with God will enjoy fellowship with other Christians (1 John 1:7). He will be found with them in Christian service. Sin separates us from God and from our fellow men. You remember when Adam and Eve sinned, that they hid themselves from God. You notice how even a child will run and hide when he has done something wrong. There is sin in our nature, and the light of God's presence will reveal it if we are walking with Him. Have you ever picked up a stone that has been lying on the ground for a long time? The minute you lift it, living things move in every direction to flee from the light. Light reveals sin. Known sin will keep you from fellowship with Christ, but fellowship with Christ will keep you from sin. Do you ask Him to throw His searchlight upon your heart?

It is wonderful to walk in the light and know just where you are going. Darkness makes men grope. When you enter a dark room you grope about, knocking your shins on a chair or stool and groaning when you do. You feel perturbed within, not knowing where you are going. Then you find the light switch and snap it on. Light floods the room! Now you can walk in and out among the chairs and tables and lamps, with no trouble at all. Light made all the difference.

The world, under Satan's dominion, is in darkness. Unbelievers are blinded and have not the light of Christ's presence shining on their path, but it is our privilege to walk in light.

Second Test — Admit You Are A Sinner

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1:8). You cannot walk with God and practice sin in your life at the same time. But God takes care of the sin question. God keeps showing us the sin in our lives. On the cross He redeemed us from the penalty of sin once and for all. But let us know, too, that He keeps cleansing us from the sins that creep into our lives by our contact with this world. We must admit it and confess it (1:8-9).

When a farmer plows his field, he throws out every stone that he finds. But the next year as the plow goes deep in the furrow, he finds other stones that had remained hidden the year before. He throws these aside as they turn up. Then the next year the same thing occurs. So in our lives! God will reveal by the plow of His Spirit the sins that are hidden in our lives, that we did not know were there. Don't be discouraged but use His remedy.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9). One day we will be freed from the very presence of sin in our bodies. That is when Jesus comes. Then our bodies *shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.* Until that time our only perfection is in Him.

Confess your sin. Don't cry over it. Don't pray in an indefinite way. Name it before God. Is it pride, lack of trust, anger, love of pleasure more than God? Well, whatever it is, lay it out before God and tell Him what it is. Call it by name. Then claim God's promise. *He is faithful and just, not only to forgive us our sins but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* A human parent can forgive us our misbehavior, but only God can cleanse our lives from sin.

God has provided a sure victory over sin. In 2:1 we read, "If any man sin, we have an advocate." There is no allowance for sin, but God has made ample provision in case we do sin. We should not sin; there should never be a compromise with evil, but there is a provision in case we do. On every ship we find an ample supply of life belts. It is not that the boat intends to sink, but they are put there in case of shipwreck. So, *if any man sin, we have an advocate.* It is God's provision in case of need. Thank Him that He has cleansed you and step out, knowing this fact. Don't wait for feeling; accept His promise.

You see, no one can be walking in the light of His presence and be ignorant of the fact that he is sinning. *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us (1:10).*

Admit sin	1:8-10
Confess it to God and to those you have wronged...	1:9
Victory—because you have an Advocate	2:1

Third Test -- Obey God's Will

He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (2:4). Obedience is a real test. God makes a very strong statement. If you say you are a Christian and do not obey Him, you are a liar. The man that is a Christian keeps God's commandments. *Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments (2:3).*

What are Christ's commandments? Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. Do you love God that way? Put yourself to a few tests. Do you spend more time listening to the radio than you do to God? Then you don't love Him with all your heart. Are you ambitious to carry out some plan in your life that you hope will bring you fame or wealth or just enjoyment? Don't say you know God when you won't keep His commandments. Do you know His will for your life? Do you want to? This is a test of your Christian life. Are you obedient to His Word? To His still small voice? Many times we do not want to let God talk to us. We will not listen to Him because we are afraid of His will for us. Youth looks for a career. God has a career for each one of us. He has a plan for every step of our lives, for, *the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.* We must obey in everything for *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

You will begin to know what God wishes as you grow to know Him better. A group of fellows were going to a nightclub of bad reputation. They stopped to ask a young chap to go along. "I can't go," he said. "Why not?" his associates asked. "Well, because my mother wouldn't want me to." "How do you know she wouldn't? She doesn't even know we are going." "Because I know my mother," was his very wise reply. This is true when you learn to know God—you will know what His desires are (3:24).

Read Christ's Word. Know what it says for you! Live it!

Fourth Test -- Imitate Christ

He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked (2:6).

We should be Christlike in all our life. Christ says, *Ye are the salt of the earth.* Salt preserves food from spoiling. Are you the preservative of your crowds? Do you keep the language clean? Do you refrain from using God's name in vain? Does your presence keep them from doing questionable things?

A little Chinese girl said, "I know why Christ said, *Ye are the salt of the earth.* Because salt makes folks thirsty and Christians should make others thirsty for Christ." Are you making folks thirsty?

Have you a golden text for your life? A good question to ask is, "What would Jesus do?"

Few people really try to find Christ. So Christ wants others to see Him reflected in us. In the famous Sistine Chapel in Rome, the beauty of the art is in the ceiling. As you enter you are given a mirror. It seems strange to see people walking around looking down when the paintings are above. But they see all the glory reflected in the mirrors before them, without breaking their necks. Be a reflector. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you.

Fifth Test -- Love Others

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

Another acid test of the Christian life is love. (2:7-11) Love absolutely changes a person. Love makes us have a concern for the welfare of others. Someone has said of a man in love, "You can tell a man in love, but can't tell him much." Love makes us have a concern for the welfare of others.

God speaks of love to others, personal attitudes. There are three chief attitudes towards others: hatred, which is murder (3:15); indifference—a feeling akin to hate—no concern (4:20, 21); love—love shows itself in different ways (2:9-11; 3:14); physically—concern for welfare (3:16-18); spiritually—concern for another’s soul. We should want to love as God loves. We should be as concerned as He for the souls of men.

Sixth Test -- Relationship To The World

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (2:12-17).

We live in a present evil age. (Gal. 1:4) The scheme of things as they exist today is not the standard for the Christian. Whenever you find him obeying them, he is walking on forbidden ground.

All sins may be put under three categories: 1. Lust of the flesh; 2. Lust of the eye; 3. Pride of life.

If you follow Jesus’ temptation in Luke 4:1-13, you will see that each of these three approaches was used by the Devil.

Temptations come through the body and its appetites and passions. The Devil tempted Jesus in this way first. Jesus had been fasting forty days, and every atom of His being cried for bread. How plausible was Satan’s temptation! It was the same appeal to appetite that Satan made to Eve. In all these thousands of years the Devil had invented no new weapon of attack. *Command that these stones become bread.* The temptation for self-gratification is one of the strongest that can assail us. Appetite is still one of the most vulnerable points, when Satan attacks us.

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine (Luke 4:7). Satan was working his second trick. How men worship at the altar of riches and honor, because they long for what their eyes see of this world. Your eyes can blacken your soul! Be careful what you see. If you throw a white tennis ball against a sooty wall, there will be a black mark left upon it. If your eye is thrown against impure objects, you can be sure a mark will be left upon your mind and heart. Be careful what you see!

Everyone wants spectacular success. The Devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and told Him to cast Himself down and if He was the Son of God, He would be kept by angels. It was a proposal to leap from the pinnacle of the temple into immediate popularity. It is a temptation for anyone to desire popularity. We all have human ambitions. How many men of genius have been led astray because the glittering prize of ambition has been held before them! We want to win it at a single stroke. How strong is the temptation to take a short cut to our ambition whether of education or wealth or position and power. We are in danger of selling our very souls to gain our end! Jesus was offered the world for a word. Who would refuse to pay this price?

Seventh Test -- Prove Christ Is Righteous By Your Life

Who is a liar but he that denieth [by life] that Jesus is the Christ? (2:22) Do we acknowledge Christ by our life and lips? *If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him (2:29).* Others watch us to see if we “do righteousness.” He who abides in Christ will bear the same fruit in his life that Christ bears and that is righteousness. We must not deny Christ by our life. Let us be Christlike in all that we do (3:1-10).

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin. It is possible for a Christian under strong temptation, to fall into sin for the time, but he will not keep practicing it. If a person continually practices sin, he may well doubt his conversion! We should consider sin as God does. He gave a Saviour to redeem us from sin. Sin cost God His Son!

Right Belief

(Read 1 John 4:1-5:11)

We need a creed by which to live. The word “creed” comes from the Latin word, “credo”—“I believe.” There are sins of the body which we all commit, but there are sins of the heart and dispositions as well. God is as interested in what you believe as in how you act.

Your sin can start in your intellect. What do you believe? Christ wants to be our only Teacher. What we believe determines how we act.

Is a creed necessary? Read John 3:16 and see if you think it is. It says, *Whosoever believeth hath everlasting life*. Christianity is Christ-centered. Christ out of Christianity leaves nothing. This means death. If we believe not, we shall die, but if we believe we shall live (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Many Christians are spiritual babes in Christ. They catch a cold with every new “wind of doctrine.” They are susceptible to all about them. When doubt fills their minds, they sink in despair. Hence everyone ought to be given a way whereby he can test every religion to see if it be true. Especially is this true in this day of so many religious beliefs.

John states the test very clearly in 4:1-3. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.*

John makes some plain statements in these verses.

1. That Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh* — “incarnos” (4:1-2; 5:20-21).
2. We must believe in the Deity of Christ (4:15; 5:5). That He is the Son of God, the only-begotten Son.
3. We must believe that Christ is our Saviour (5:10-12).

Love is the supreme test of our Christian faith. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death* (3:14). The word LOVE occurs 48 times in this first epistle of John. We find out how “love” acts in 1 Corinthians 13. Read it again and refresh your memory.

Love is like an irrigating dam. It is only what runs out that does any good. Love must flow out to every man; must build hospitals, send missionaries, feed the hungry, protect the weak—in short, be a modern Good Samaritan. That is what a real Christian will do with his salvation, not just talk about it, but live it, use it, send it out for a blessing.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love (4:8). Love is the first instinct of the renewed heart. Where do we get our love? From within? No, from above. *We love Him, because He first loved us* (4:19). What if we do not love? God describes us like this, *We know not God*.

We should show our love to Him by loving one another (4:7). He who has love in his heart has fellowship with God. (4:16) But where there is no love, there is no fellowship (4:19-21).

Rich Rewards

(Read 1 John 5:12-21)

The rewards of a life in Christ are stated in the last verses of chapter 5:12-21.

Assurance of eternal life.	5:13
Power of prayer.....	5:14, 15
Power of intercession	5:16
Victory.	5:18 and 5:4, 5

Underline the word “KNOW” in verses 12-20. We can have a confidence when we know Christ. John uses the word “know” over forty times in his epistles. True Christianity is more than a creed—it is something that can be known and felt. We know that Christ was manifested to take away our sins. We know that we have passed from death unto life. We know that whatsoever we ask we shall receive. Again and again John assures us of these truths.

What we KNOW

Find these references—2:3,4,13,14,20,21,29; 3:2,5,14, 15,19,24; 4:2,6,13,16; 5:2,12,15,18-20

2 JOHN *Portrays Jesus Christ, The Truth.*

3 JOHN *Portrays Jesus Christ, The Way.*

JUDE *Portrays Jesus Christ, Our Keeper.*

