

## **The Background of 1 John**

**The Apostle John is historically credited with writing the Gospel of John in about A.D. 90 and his three letters soon after. He wrote in the City of Ephesus a few years before being exiled to the Island of Patmos, where he would pen the apocalyptic book of Revelation. John had helped start several churches in Asia Minor, and his pastoral letters were addressed to congregations which were now experiencing a crisis of faith.**

**False teachers had come in and confused the churches, and in response John wrote letters which help to anchor them (and generations of Christians to follow) in the essentials of the faith. He gets right to the core of what it means to live as children of God. John's invitation is to walk in love. Our spiritual confidence, hope, power to overcome, forgiveness of sin, and direction in life all begin and end with the love of God, and our love for one another.**

**John provides a series of tests for distinguishing between genuine Christians and those who falsely claim to know Jesus Christ. There is the doctrinal test: What does this person believe about Jesus? There is the moral test: How does this person respond to his commandments? Finally, there is the social test: Does this person love others?**

**In this series "Love, More than a Feeling" Pastor Jeff will be taking us through several ways to apply John's focus on God's love in our lives:**

**September 10: The Foundations of Love (1 John 1)**

**September 17: Love Indicators (1 John 2:3-11)**

**September 24: Impediment to Love (1 John 2:15-17)**

**October 1: Love in Action (1 John 3:11-24)**

**October 8: Love is the Theme (1 John 4:7-16)**

**October 15: Love to Change the World (1 John 5)**

## Discussion Questions: The Foundation of Love 1 John 1:1-10

Drawn from the September 10, 2023 sermon by Dr. Jeff Chandler

Opener: Think of an unusual experience you have had – an amazing place you have visited, an incredible meal, a remarkable person you have met. How would you go about explaining it to people who have not had the same experience?

### I. Bedrock Belief

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> 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 1:1-2 (NIV)

1. What does it mean to refer to Jesus as the "Word of Life" and how does it impact your understanding what real love is all about?
2. How do you distinguish between something or someone being "the real deal" or not?

### II. Fellow Followers

*<sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> We write this to make our joy complete.* 1 John 1:3-4 (NIV)

3. In terms of your own faith, what have you "seen and heard" that you love to talk about?

4. Pastor Jeff spoke about love being a "team sport". Can you give an example?

### **III. Real Revelation**

<sup>5</sup> *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.* <sup>6</sup> *If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.* 1 John 1:5-6 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.* <sup>20</sup> *Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.* <sup>21</sup> *But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.* John 3:19-21(NIV)

5. Based on these two similar passages, what do light and darkness symbolize? What are some specific aspects of God's character that illustrate light and how do we apply this to ourselves?

6. Why is it important to understand that "God is truth" in the context of love and relationships?

7. What are some lies we need to watch out for?

### **IV. Authentic Assessment**

<sup>7</sup> *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.* <sup>8</sup> *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.* <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* <sup>10</sup> *If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.* 1 John 1:7-10 (NIV)

8. What does our denial or confession of sin reveal about our relationship with God? How easy is it for you to admit sin? Do you find it embarrassing or freeing?

9. How would you like to present yourself more honestly to others?

**Group Prayer Time:**

John wants to help us to have an assurance of who Jesus is and how he empowers our lives. We are challenged to walk in the light and bring our sin to God for his forgiveness and cleansing. Pray that members of the group will take his message to heart. If there are any issues people are dealing with, pray that God will help them grow in that area. Pray also for any needs you and others are facing.

**For Personal Reflection on your own:**

When you know you have sinned, how do you usually go about confessing? Do you share with a friend, a pastor, journal, just mull it over?

What attitudes in your own life does this passage bring to light?