

# 1 John

## Introduction

In John's first epistle, the "Epistle of Love," he emphasizes repeatedly that love is more than an emotion or a feeling. It is more than words and verbal expressions. Love is active. It is visible.

## Life in the light

**Read 1 John 2:1,2.** The word translated "Advocate" (NIV 2011, EHV) or "one who speaks to the Father in our defense" (NIV 1984) is the word παράκλητον (*parakleton*). Describe the picture painted by this word.

Why are John's words here a tremendous comfort and joy for you?

The word ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*) here is translated "atoning sacrifice" (NIV, EHV) or "propitiation" (KJV). Where is this word and its relative ἱλαστήριον (*hilasterion*) used in the Greek Septuagint Old Testament (LXX)?

What do the words *atonement* and *propitiation* mean?

What personal comfort do you take from the fact that Jesus is the ἱλασμός for the whole world?

Why need we never be afraid to confess any sin before God our Father?

## Living a life of love

**Read 1 John 2:3-11.** John continues to teach us that ongoing, deliberate, unrepented sin is incompatible with the Christian faith. Reconcile John's teaching here with Scripture's message that our salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.

We know that we all sin much. Romans 7 reminds us how much we struggle with sin. How do those words fit with what John is saying here?

What does walking as Jesus did look like today?

What is the "new command"—that is really an old command—that John is alluding to here? (**See John 13:34,35.**)

Throughout his ministry Jesus emphasized love and forgiveness (consider the Lord's Prayer). How do hatred and bearing a grudge negate Christian faith?

**Read 1 John 2:12-14.** This could be a poem that John is writing or quoting. Is there something significant about how John addresses his comments to different groups of people?

**Discuss:** How do temptations and challenges to our faith change throughout the seasons of life?

How do opportunities to let our light shine and live a life of love change throughout the seasons of life?

## **Love for the world gets in the way of loving others**

**Read 1 John 2:15-17.** What does John mean by “the world”?

How is John’s teaching here similar to the gnostic teaching that material things are evil? How is it different?

**Discuss:** We are Americans raised and thoroughly immersed in American culture. Some things about American culture are good and commendable, other things are wicked and destructive, and other things are more neutral and in-between. How can our American way of thinking become an obstacle to our Christian faith and living the life of love that Jesus calls us to?

## **Watch out for false teachers!**

**Read 1 John 2:18-27.** John calls out “the antichrist” and “many antichrists.” The antichrist is associated with “the man of lawlessness” described in 2 Thessalonians 2. Here John specifically calls out anti-Christian teachings. Those who teach these things are “antichrists” because their teaching opposes Christ. Jesus came to save, but these people destroy. What is the source of everything that is untrue?

These false teachers left the fellowship of the apostles and went off teaching their own things. Their teaching did not bear the mark of apostolic authority. Where do we see the same thing happening today?

Jesus tells us to watch out for false teachers (Matthew 7:15-23). The Apostle Paul tells us to keep away from false teachers (Romans 16:17,18). John warns us against false teachers here. Why do people still follow false teachers? Why do Lutheran Christians abandon what they’ve been taught from Scripture and listen to false teachers?

What false teachings were the antichrists of John’s day peddling?

What false teachings today are especially seductive and appealing?

What is the “anointing” John speaks of? How does this anointing keep us securely in the truth?