

## Little Books, Big Truths

### Women in the Word

Week of	9/10	Introduction		
	9/17	Lesson 1	Philemon	page 8
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Week of	1/7	Lesson 10	1 John 1:1 - 2:6	page 32
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*“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever!”*

*2 Peter 3:18*



## **Discussion Group Guidelines**

### **1. The Bible is the sole authority upon which we stand.**

We believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. God wants to speak to you through His word. Please complete your lesson *before* using outside resources. The questions in the study booklet are meant to guide you in comprehending the lesson. If a particular segment baffles you, just leave it and move on. The study guide purposely includes a variety of questions. There are easy questions for Bible beginners and challenging ones for longtime Scripture readers. Please be understanding of our desire to appeal to a wide range of Bible students. *Do feel free to call* one of your small group leaders or the teaching leaders if you have a question. Our goal is that you will have a deeper appreciation of God's word and a closer relationship with Him.

### **2. Please come prepared for small group time by having your lesson for the week completed.**

On occasion, completion may not be possible although it should *always* be your goal. Each week your leader will be guiding the discussion by going through the questions from this study guide. It is a real blessing to have everyone ready to add to the discussion by having the lesson done. There may be times when you have not been able to finish. Please *do come* to the Bible study and participate anyway. You will be missed if you aren't here!

### **3. Please have respect for each other's beliefs and insights.**

There are women in your small group from many different denominations and backgrounds. Please do not criticize any church or religious organization. Since God is trying to teach you, we can trust Him to be doing similar work in the lives of everyone else in your group. If you find yourself disagreeing with someone, take care to watch what you say.

### **4. Please be prompt.**

Since arriving late is disruptive to your group, do try to be on time for every session if possible. On difficult days for you, we will welcome you even if late.

### **5. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion.**

Everyone has something to share. If you are aware that you have a tendency to answer every question, try not to do so. In this way, all will have a chance to participate. If you are a timid person, please know that *you have words of value* to add to your group. What may seem elementary or trivial to you may be just what someone else needs to hear. The interaction within your group can be a wonderful time of sharing, learning, and growing with other women.

### **6. Cell phone interruptions are distracting.**

As a rule, cell phones should be silenced during both small and large group sessions, and we would appreciate it if you would refrain from texting. Nevertheless, we realize that there are circumstances, such as a sick child at home, which may require contact. We value your attempts to attend the Bible study. Therefore, if your cell phone rings or vibrates, please leave quickly to a

quiet area. During the large group teaching time, please sit at the end of a back row if your phone is on. If you do receive a call, kindly exit quietly before answering.

**7. Present your prayer requests in a tasteful manner. It is more important to pray for each other than to try to fix one another's problems.**

Prayer petitions should be handled without embarrassment to anyone, whether that person is present or not. If you would like, you may share more in depth with your leader. She will be happy to spend some time listening to you and praying for you. In this way everyone will have time to express her request or praise. When others share prayer requests, it isn't as important to discuss or try to fix their problems as it is to pray for them. "How can we pray for you in this situation?" will be our guideline.

**8. Keep to yourself everything that is shared within your group. Personal information should not be repeated outside the group.**

Privacy is so critical. It is hard for people to open up and share if they feel as if everything they say will soon be public knowledge. Harmony and spiritual growth will occur more readily in an atmosphere of love and trust.

**9. Generosity in your donations is vital and appreciated.**

No one should feel under pressure to give money each week, however, your contributions are needed mostly to support our extensive Kids in the Word ministry. Moms should keep in mind the benefit their little ones are receiving from this program. Additionally, each woman without young children should feel some responsibility in making it possible for those caring for young ones to attend and for educating the children about God's love.

Women in the Word now offer the option of donation by text message. To utilize this new method of giving, simply text 970-DoI-Give (364-4483) with the amount you want to give followed by WITW which designates that your donation will support the Women in the Word ministry.

For example: "20 WITW" will donate \$20 to Women in the Word.

**10. Problem issues could arise from specialized announcements.**

Our policy is that we wish to be free, both in small groups and in the large group of announcements for church programs, fund raisers, or your personal business. Please don't put us in the position of making a decision on your particular request.

**11. Source information.**

As our speakers work on their talks and writing their questions for their lessons, they may consult a variety of biblical literature. For the sake of time, our speakers do not cite their sources unless explicitly quoting someone. However, if you would like further information on sources, please request it from that speaker.

Abbreviations for commonly used Bible translations:

ESV – English Standard Version

NASB – New American Standard Bible

NIV – New International Version

NLT – New Living Translation

## **12. Recording of the Large Group Teachings are available to listen to online.**

If you miss a week or wish to review a teaching, the Large Group Teachings are available on our website at [www.faithepc.org/women](http://www.faithepc.org/women) or on our podcast channel “Faith Church Women.”

## **13. When the Thompson School District R2-J dismisses school for snowy weather, Women in the Word will not be meeting.**

To check with the district on closures, phone 970-613-6788. That week’s lesson will be covered the following week.

## **14. Illness Policy.**

We enjoy seeing you, but please, if you are experiencing symptoms such as headache, runny nose, sore throat, fever, etc. it would be better for you to stay home.

**Come to learn, grow, share, and have fun!**



## **Kids in the Word Family Information**

### **Vision:**

To provide a fun, safe, loving atmosphere that offers lessons from the Bible and about the love of Jesus. This group is for the children of family members who are attending the Women in the Word Bible Study.

### **What we do in Kids in the Word:**

We are a structured program that meets weekly in the Children's Ministry Area of Faith Church. This is NOT childcare, but a solid meaningful experience in a safe environment where scripture is taught to help children grow in their faith.

There will be Bible stories, prayers, songs, Bible lessons, activities, crafts, snacks, and bathroom breaks. We will have outside play if weather permits. Lessons are set up by Kids in the Word Administration to follow the same study topics as Women in the Word.

For the 2023-2024 year, Kids in the Word will study Small Books, Big Truths. Family members will receive an annual schedule on the first day of the Bible Study to keep at home. This will include Bible verses, dates, and topics for the lessons in Kids in the Word. Kids in the Word teachers will follow a set daily schedule that offers active participation for the kids as well as Bible lessons and snacks.

### **Registration/ Sign in and out Policy:**

Registration information is available from the Kids in the Word Administration. This will be kept on file in the children's ministry office. There will be a sign in/out procedure for a family member to complete daily at drop off and pick up time. This will be explained on the first day your child attends. A pager will be provided to notify a family member of any concerns. At the conclusion of Women in the Word each day, it is very important to pick up your children from Kids in the Word promptly. Children need to be picked up no later than 11:15 am. The staff working with your children greatly appreciates this effort.

### **Snacks:**

Gluten, dairy, and nut free snacks will be provided. If your child has special dietary needs or allergies, indicate on your registration form and please talk with Dolly.



### **Sick Child Policy:**

If any children show signs or symptoms such as fever (100 or higher), vomiting or diarrhea (in the last 24 hours), unexplained rash, runny nose with colored discharge, pink eye, or croup, please keep the child at home for extra rest and TLC. Please contact Dolly as soon as possible by phone/text message so staffing changes can be made if your child is not attending because of illness or other reasons. If symptoms develop during Kids in The Word, you will be paged to come and take them home.

### **General reminders:**

All teachers are experienced with kids and have passed background checks. They are here because they love kids and have a passion for teaching kids about Jesus.

To assist your child's ability to adjust and join in the fun sooner, give hugs and say goodbyes quickly. Your child will then enter the room and be received by the teacher.

Please provide a jacket, diapers, and a change of clothes each day your child attends Kids in the Word.

We are excited for this year in Kids in the Word. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Children's Ministry Coordinator and the Kids in the Word Director, Dolly Shuler.

Contact information: [Dollys@faithepc.org](mailto:Dollys@faithepc.org) Church phone 970-663-0522 Cell phone 623-986-6150

## Lesson 1

## Philemon

**Memorable Verse:** “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home.” Philemon 1:1-2 (NIV)

1. Read through the article on pages 65-66 about the New Testament world and comment on anything that surprises or enlightens you.

### **Read the letter of Philemon.**

2. From whom and to whom is this letter written? (vv. 1-2)
3. List the godly qualities which Philemon has already displayed. (vv. 4-7)
4. As a runaway slave, Onesimus normally would have received harsh treatment and very possible death. What is Paul’s request on his behalf? *Note: More is implied than stated.*
5. What is the basis for Paul’s request? (vv. 8-17, 20)



(a) How is Paul demonstrating and asking Philemon to demonstrate Jesus' command about the use of authority? See Matthew 20:25-28.

(b) When have you seen leadership done well? Explain.

6. In what ways does Paul acknowledge the possible legitimate offense against Philemon?

7. Consider the risks involved for:

(a) Onesimus as he delivers this letter to Philemon.

(b) Philemon if he responds favorably to Paul's letter.

8. When have you taken or seen someone take the role of Philemon (the one called to reconciliation), Onesimus (the one needing reconciliation), or Paul (the mediator)?

Bible Project Poster for Philemon is on Page 71

## Lesson 2

## 1 Peter 1:1-2:3

### Read 1 Peter 1:1-14.

1. What do we learn about the people to whom Peter is writing? (vv. 1-2)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What has God done for them (and for us)? (vv. 1-5)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Peter's audience is suffering for their faith. What does he share about the value and outcome of suffering and trials? (vv. 6-7)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Peter, an eyewitness of Jesus, is writing to those who have never seen Him. What qualities characterized their relationship with Jesus? (vv. 8-9)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Consider the commands in verses 13-14. How do our minds and thoughts impact our spiritual life of faith and obedience?

### Read 1 Peter 1:13-21.

6. As God's children, we are not to conform to our sinful habits but to conform to our Holy Father's holy way. *Holiness implies a cleansed and pure life dedicated to God, not sinlessness.* Compare the two aspects of our holiness.
  - (a) We are made holy. (See 1 Peter 1:2 and 2:9.) *Note: sanctify means to make holy.*
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) We choose to live a holy life. (See 1 Peter 1:13-19.)

**Read 1 Peter 1:22-25.**

7. How does being cleansed from sin and choosing God's pure way help us love others more fully?

8. Share a time when the Word of God encouraged you. What do you hope for this year?

**Read 1 Peter 2:1-3.**

9. How does the image of God as a nursing mother providing for her newborn expand your view of God?

10. In what ways might the negative behaviors in verse 1 limit our cravings for God's pure milk?

11. Salvation is a many-faceted diamond. What different aspects of salvation do we see in 1 Peter 1:9-13 and 2:2-3?

12. The passages for this lesson are filled with thoughts which inspire hope even if the word hope is not used. Review the passages. Which of the hope verses speak most loudly to you?

Bible Project Poster for 1 Peter is on Page 72

### Lesson 3

### 1 Peter 2:4-3:7

**Memorable Verse:** “But you (*plural*) are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9 ( NIV)

#### **Read 1 Peter 2:4-10.**

1. List the phrases which Peter says define the followers of Jesus. (vv. 5, 9-10)
2. Notice these are not individual but group images. What impact might this letter have had on the early churches made up of Jews and Gentiles with very different backgrounds and lifestyles, who also feel out of sync with their communities (1 Peter 1:1, 17; 1 Peter 2:11)?
3. This is also true of Christians today. Which phrase resonates most strongly with you? Why?

#### **Read 1 Peter 2:11-17.**

*Peter applies the principle of submission to three key situations: the government, slavery, marriage. Read the article in the appendix on pages 67-68 to gain more understanding of the highly authoritarian structure of the world in Peter’s day.*

4. Our culture values freedom from authority—“I can do what I want.” What does it mean to Peter for us to live as free people? (vv. 16-17)
5. In Acts 4:5-10 and 18-20, Peter provides an interesting balance to verses 13-14. Explain.

#### **Read 1 Peter 2:18-25.**

6. What guidance is given to Christian slaves?

7. What might it mean for a slave to know that Jesus, who understood unjust suffering, is his Shepherd and the Guardian of his soul?

**Read 1 Peter 3:1-7.**

8. What guidance is given to Christian wives?
9. Compare a gentle and quiet spirit with a quiet personality.
10. What consequences are there for husbands who do not honor their wives and live with them in an understanding way.
11. Read 1 Peter 2:12, 15-16, 20-25, and 3:1-2.
  - (a) Discuss the motivation Peter gives for our submission to authority.
  - (b) How does functioning from this motivation keep one from becoming a “doormat”?
12. These instructions were given in a highly authoritarian culture. What principles can we apply to our more equality-oriented culture?

## Lesson 4

## 1 Peter 3:8-4:6

**Memorable Verse:** “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” 1 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

**Read 1 Peter 3:8-12.**

1. Describe the interactions between people encouraged in these verses.
2. What is the reason Peter gives for acting in the ways he commends in verses 8-9?
  - (a) How does your church family or your friends express the traits given here? How does this impact you personally?
  - (b) Evaluate your own contributions to the body-life desired. How could you improve your interactions within the “family of God”?

**Read 1 Peter 3:13-17.**

3. What does Peter say our attitude should be toward sharing our faith with outsiders?
4. Honestly assess your own attitude and express your ponderings here.
5. Describe Peter’s guidance about how we talk to others about our faith? How does Peter’s guidance help you have the right perspective? Why is this especially important in our culture today?
6. Describe the hope we have in Christ (v.15).
7. What are some reasons why you have that hope? In other words, what would you say if someone asked you why you have this Christian hope? How does that hope affect your life in positive ways?

**Read 1 Peter 3:18-22.**

8. How does verse 18 encourage you as you face a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christians?

9. From verses 19-22.

*This section (vv. 19-22) is a bit of a “rabbit trail,” and is notoriously difficult to interpret; there is little to no consensus among evangelical scholars.* Verse 19 is a transition to a new thought right in the middle of a sentence. This paragraph is a string of ideas, each one branching off from the previous.

- Christ preached to the spirits of people who were in prison because of their disobedience in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.
- Eight people were saved in the ark through the flood waters.
- Baptism (in water) is a picture of that salvation. ... somehow based on the resurrection of Jesus.
- Jesus has now gone into heaven where He has been given authority. This circles back to the thought in verse 18 that Jesus has been made alive in the spirit.

(a) Take a moment to praise God for what you learned about Jesus Christ and God the Father in these verses.

(b) What do you learn about life after death?

(c) In what ways is baptism like the ark/flood? Reflect on what baptism means to you.

**Read 1 Peter 4:1-6.**

10. What is the “same way of thinking” we should have (v.1)? The same as what?

11. Have you ever experienced the kind of reaction from friends that Peter describes in verse 4? How did it make you feel? How did you respond?

## Lesson 5

## 1 Peter 4:7-5:13

### Read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

1. List some of the ways Peter says we can serve one another.
2. Peter states in verse 8, "Above all, love each other deeply." With what kind of a heart do we serve others?

### Read 1 Peter 4:12-19.

3. Share a time in your life when you were able to defend Christ or your faith.
4. How was it received?
5. In verses 12-19, what are Peter's instructions concerning when our message about Christ is not well received?

### Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.

6. Peter discusses being "shepherds of God's flock."
  - (a) What are some guidelines Peter lays out for church leadership?
  - (b) We too have people God has asked us to shepherd. Name others in your life you shepherd with a willing heart and mind.



**Read I Peter 5:5-7.**

7. In Peter's day, leadership was always in the hands of the older men. He is calling the young men to follow well. Name several ways you can follow your leaders well in humility.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How can humility toward all be a part of our everyday life?

**Read I Peter 5:8-11.**

9. Peter warns the believers exactly how the enemy thinks and appears "like a roaring lion." What are some ways you personally find helpful to resist and stand firm in the faith?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. How does the God of all grace and power support you and yours in your suffering?

**Read 1 Peter 5:12-14.**

11. In closing, Peter shares why he wrote this letter. Review the letter and notice how he has covered his main points.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. In verse 13, "she who is in Babylon" refers to the Christians in Rome. Comment on the warmth and love in verses 13-14 from Peter to his readers.

### **Review 1**

1. Reread the articles about 1<sup>st</sup> century culture on pages 65 and 66. What are your reactions to God's plan to take the slow path of heart change to life change to relationship/community change?
  
2. Peter sets our suffering within the big picture of God's plan (1 Peter 1:3-5) and then shares some of the value of suffering (1 Peter 1:6-7). Please share a time when suffering was turned to good in your life.
  
3. Peter challenges his readers to live such good lives that they will silence their critics and bring glory to God (1 Peter 2:11-12, 15).
  - (a) What are some things Christians (and you individually) can do in that same spirit to silence our critics?
  
  - (b) Take some time and pray for persecuted Christians around the world that they too would bring glory to God and be able to live good lives that silence their critics.

4. Review 1 Peter 3:3-4. Women spend billions of dollars to foster outward beauty. What are some things we can do to intentionally foster inner beauty introductory statement?
5. In 1 Peter 3:8-11, we are given a list of qualities which should be evident among God's people. When have you been blessed because another Christian was living this list well?
6. Jesus is currently in heaven in a position of authority and honor over angels and other spiritual beings (1 Peter 3:22). What security do you find in remembering that He is our Savior and our Lover?
7. 1 Peter 4:19 challenges those who suffer to trust God and continue to do good. Why might it be hard to do those when suffering?

## Lesson 6

## 2 Peter 1

### Memorable Verse:

**“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence.” 2 Peter 1:3 (ESV)**

### Read 2 Peter 1:1-4.

1. Peter had firsthand experience knowing Jesus. These churches had never seen Jesus, but they loved and believed Him. (1 Peter 1:8-9) Their faith was based on the Holy Scriptures. Read the following verses and note what “precious and very great promises” they might have clung to.

Lamentations 3:22-23 -

Proverbs 3:5-6 -

Daniel 6:13-18 -

2. What does God promise to provide as we try to balance knowledge of scripture and living a life that reflects Jesus? Describe how this has affected you personally.

### Read 2 Peter 1:5-11.

3. We base our faith on Jesus and try to emulate His character. Connect the following verses on the left to the corresponding characteristic we should pattern after on the right.

Romans 5:3-5 -

Self-control

Romans 12:10 -

Knowledge

Galatians 5:22-23 -

Virtue/moral excellence

Ephesians 4:15-16 -

Steadfast/persistence

Philippians 4:8 -

Love for others

Colossians 2:3 -

Godliness

1 Timothy 4:7-8 -

Brotherly affection

4. Choose one or more of these characteristics you need today and explain how this could impact your life.

5. In what ways does the knowledge of Jesus and living a godly life that reflects that knowledge relate to each other?

**Read 2 Peter 1:12-18.**

6. How could Peter be sure that what he said about Jesus was true?
7. Peter is calling these churches to remember key facts about who Jesus is from the Father's perspective. What do the following verses tell you about your own relationship with Jesus?

John 11:25-26 –

John 15:1-11 –

John 17:3-

Romans 3:23-

Ephesians 2:8-9-

**Read 2 Peter 1:19-21.**

8. We are told that God alone is the originator of the Holy Scriptures (and not man's own imagination). Why would this impact how you relate to what you read in the Bible?
9. Peter says to "pay attention" to what the Bible has to say. When have you experienced the word of God illuminating your way along life's path?
10. After reading 2 Peter 1, we see that Peter was desperate for these dear friends to know how to hear and discern truth because of the difficult times ahead of them. Read Matthew 7:15-20. What did Jesus tell Peter to look for? What should you be looking for?

Bible Project Poster for 2 Peter is on Page 73

## **Lesson 7**

## **2 Peter 2**

### **Read 2 Peter 2:1-3.**

1. Why are false teachers dangerous?

### **Read 2 Peter 2:4-9.**

2. What is the lesson Peter wants his readers to learn from these restated events from the Old Testament? ( Some of these are written in other ancient manuscripts that Peter would have known.)

### **Read 2 Peter 2:10-18.**

3. Identify the warning signs that can help to recognize a false teacher.
4. Give some reasons why you think some people are attracted to these teachers. What is the result?

### **Read 2 Peter 2:19-22.**

5. Verse 19 says that these teachers promise freedom. Why might some people be lured or even enslaved by these freedoms?

6. What is the fate of those who are “entangled” and “overcome” by false teachers?

7. State the warning signs given to these false teachers.

8. Explain the reason it might be better for a false teacher to never have known the truth.  
(See Luke 11:24-26; Hebrews 6:4-6.)

9. Go back and read 1 Peter 1:14 and compare what Christ’s work has done with slavery and freedom. (See 2 Peter 2:19.) How is what Christ has done different from what a false teacher is offering?

**Read the Apostles’ Creed on page 69.** Meditate on each line. Allow the full meaning of each line to sink into your soul, then answer the question below. (Note: In the context “catholic” means the “universal” or “general” church, those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.)

10. What is the best way you can protect yourself from the influence of false teachers?

## Lesson 8

## 2 Peter 3

### Read 2 Peter 3:1-2.

1. Why did Peter write these letters (1 and 2 Peter)?
2. What words of comfort and hope does Peter give us while we wait for the Lord's return?
3. Read John 14:1-3 and Acts 1:6-11. How can these verses also give us comfort?
4. Why is it important to remember these things?

### Read 2 Peter 3:3-9.

5. Write in your own words what will happen in the last days.

### Read 2 Peter 3:10-13.

6. Restate Peter's description of "the day of the Lord."



**Read 2 Peter 3:14-18.**

7. How should we live our lives while waiting for the Lord's return? Why?
8. If the Lord's return should come in your lifetime, how would God find your work in relation to Him? To Others?
9. What things in this chapter cause you to pay attention? Explain why this is important.
10. Write a prayer thanking God that he is in control of all things. Ask him to reveal to you what steps you need to take to prepare yourself for His return whenever that might happen.





NO WOMEN IN THE WORD GROUPS  
MEET THIS WEEK.

**Memorable Verse:** “Dear Friends, I’ve dropped everything to write to you about this life of salvation that we have in common. I have to write insisting-----begging!----- that you fight with everything you have in you for this faith entrusted to us as a gift to guard and cherish.”

**Jude 3 (Message)**

**Read Jude.**

1. Jude is very similar to 2 Peter 2. Why do you think it was necessary to include them both in the New Testament?
2. List as many of the words and phrases as you can that Jude uses to describe false teachers. (The list may vary depending on what translation of the Bible you are using.)
3. Name the two major false teachings.
4. How can the words used by Jude to describe Jesus keep a Christian from falling prey to false teaching? (See v. 4.)
5. What is Jude’s purpose in pointing out these events and characteristics of false teachers? What is their fate?
6. Jude uses a series of metaphors to describe false teachers. Name them.
7. How do each of these point out dangers that can be done by false teachers?

8. Jude gives two specific instructions to believers in the face of these dangers.

(a) What are they?

(b) Why are they important to remember?

9. How would practicing these instructions help keep us on track to living out our faith according to what is true?

10. Name two ways you can protect yourself and other believers you know from falling prey to false teachers.

11. Verses 24 and 25 are called a doxology. Look up the meaning of the word.

12. State how these words can give you courage and protect you from false teachers.

Bible Project Poster for Jude is on Page 75



*Merry  
Christmas!*



**CHRISTMAS  
BRUNCH**



DECEMBER 5, 2023  
9AM-11AM, FAITH CHURCH





For unto us a child is born....

**Christmas Break**

**Dec 6, 2023-**

**Jan 6, 2024**

## Lesson 10

## 1 John 1:1-2:6

### Read 1 John 1:1-4.

1. What gives John the authority to speak about Jesus?

2. Read John 1:1-5 and 1 John 1:1-4.

(a) Compare these two passages.

(b) What do these teach us about Jesus?

3. Discuss the depth of fellowship we see in verses 3-4.

### Read 1 John 1:5-10.

4. Observe John's use of "light" and "dark." What does this add to our understanding of fellowship which he introduced above?

5. List the three deceptions which are mentioned in verses 6, 8, and 10.

6. How can we deceive ourselves about sin?

7. Why is confession an important step in ending the deception?



8. What is God's response to our confession? (v.9)

9. How does forgiving us demonstrate both God's faithfulness and justice? *Also see 1:7 and 2:2.*

**Read 1 John 2:1-6.**

10. Why is Jesus the perfect advocate for us?

11. List the additional deception found in this section? (v. 4)

12. How does the context of these verses confirm that obedience is not legalism?

13. What have we learned throughout this lesson that helps us know how to "walk as Jesus walked"?

Bible Project Poster for 1-3 John is on Page 74

## Lesson 11

## 1 John 2:7-29

### Read 1 John 2:7-11.

1. John is referring to his command in John 13:34-35—love one another. How is this command both old and new? Also see Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:36-40.
2. Discuss the ways in which this new command flows from the very life of Jesus.
3. In verses 8-11, John circles around to the light/dark motif which he began in 1 John 1:5-7. What does he add in this segment?
4. John's repeated discussion of love/hate in this letter implies that these Christians have been in conflict. How are light and dark seen within church conflict and church healing?

### Read 1 John 2:12-14.

5. What has each group in this section experienced or known? *Note: John would have intended this to apply to all in the church—not just males.*

Children -

Fathers -

Young men -

6. Sandwiched between warnings, what encouragement does this section offer John's audience?

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

7. “World” is used in a variety of ways in the New Testament. In these verses the world system is in rebellion to God and seeks to draw us away from Him. How can love for the following seduce us away from God?

The craving for physical pleasure (NLT) — the lust of the flesh (NASB).

The craving for everything we see (NLT) — the lust of the eyes (NASB).

The pride in our achievements and positions (NLT) — the boastful pride of life (NASB).

8. How can we receive the good with thanksgiving but not come under the spell of “the world”?

**Read 1 John 2:18-29.**

9. Discuss the actions and teachings which reveal the true nature of the antichrists.

10. What are some false teachings about Jesus that are promoted today?

11. The Greek word “meno” (abide, remain) is used 11 times in this chapter (vv. 6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 x 3, 27 x 2, and 28) with various applications. Big picture, what does John want us to understand?

**Memorable 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)

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

1. According to verse 1, what is our identity and why is that significant?
2. Why doesn't the world know us? Have you experienced this?

**Read 1 John 3:4-10.** *John is not saying God's children have attained absolute sinless perfection, but differentiates between people who habitually practice sinning (3:6,9) versus those that commit sporadic acts of sin (1:8,10).*

3. What are two reasons that Jesus came to the world?

(a) Read Hebrews 9:26-28. How did He destroy sin and the works of the devil?

(b) How does our status as children of God affect our relationship with sin?

4. According to this passage, what differentiates children of God from children of the devil?
5. Review 1 John 1:7-10, which gives practical clarification to the question of sin in believers' lives. How does the child of God deal with sin in her life?

**Read 1 John 3:11-18.**

6. Why did Cain kill Abel? See Genesis 4:1-9 for the original story.

7. How does John emphasize the importance of love in the lives of the children of God?
8. What is the example of love that Jesus set for us?
9. Does verse 18 mean that we shouldn't say I love you? Why or why not?

**Read 1 John 3:19-24.**

10. John discusses how we can know we are of the truth and set our hearts at rest.
  - (a) What assurance do we have if our hearts condemn us?
  - (b) What do we have if our hearts do not condemn us?
  - (c) Discuss how this passage addresses guilt over sin.
11. What are the two parts of God's command in verse 23?
12. Share an example of someone you know (or have read about) who loves in deed and in truth.

## Review 2

1. Review 2 Peter 1:2-4. For what reasons does God multiply His grace, peace and true knowledge of His Son?
2. In 2 Peter 1:12-15, Peter tells his friends to “recall”, “remember”, and “be reminded” of the fact that Jesus Christ is God’s Son (God Himself said so!). What difference does it make in your life to have a clear understanding of who Jesus Christ is in history and today?
3. Compare 2 Peter 2:5-11 with Galatians 5:16-22. How do these verses keep us from falling prey to false teachers?
4. Read Joel 2:1-11, Zephaniah 2:1-3, Matthew 24:36-44, and 2 Peter 3:3-10. Discuss in our groups what these passages tell us about the Lord’s return (the Day of the Lord).
5. Paul along with Jude (Jude 4:12-13) warns about false teaching. How have the Galatians been affected by false teachers (Galatians 5:1-15)?

6. The Almighty God created time, space, and our universe. He entered our world and could be heard, seen, and touched (1 John 1:1-2; John 1:14) to restore our fellowship with Him and with one another. Spend some time soaking in the wonder of His love and share your thoughts.
  
7. 1 John 2:20 and 27 have been interpreted in two ways. Discuss how each of these can ground us and protect us from heresy.
  - (a) Anointing—the Holy Spirit ((John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 10:26)
  
  - (b) Anointing—the Word of God/message of the gospel (from the context of 1 John 2)
  
8. John often refers to believers as brothers and sisters. How have followers of Christ been like family to you?
  
9. How does 1 John 3:21-24 relate to your personal prayer life?

## Lesson 13

## 1 John 4

**Memorable Verse:** “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.” 1 John 4:9 (NIV)

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

1. What questions can we ask to test and know if something is from God?
2. How does John describe the spirit of the Antichrist?
3. According to verse 4, whom have we overcome?
  - (a) How have we overcome them?
  - (b) Share your feelings about this truth?
4. According to verse 5, does the popularity of a given philosophy indicate its trustworthiness? Why or why not?

**Read 1 John 4:7-15.**

5. Describe the correlation between love and knowing God.
6. Re-read verses 9-10.
  - (a) Define atoning sacrifice. Use a dictionary or Bible commentary if desired.
  - (b) How did God exemplify love for us?



(c) Compare God's purpose in sending His Son according to this passage with what John says in 1 John 3:5-8.

7. John saw, walked, and talked with Jesus while He was on earth. If a neighbor asked you why you believe, what would you say convinces you that Jesus is both the Son of God and the Savior of the world?

**Read 1 John 4:16-21.**

8. How do we practically rely on God's love?
9. Explain in your own words what John means when he says in verse 16 that if we abide in love we also abide in God.
10. What does John mean by there is no fear in love?
11. Compare verses 11 and 19. How does knowing God took the initiative to love us first affect our attitude and ability to love others?
12. What specific steps will you take this week to demonstrate God's love?

## Lesson 14

## 1 John 5

**Memorable Verse: “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” 1 John 5:11 (NIV)**

**Read 1 John 5:1-12.**

1. According to John, how do we know we are children of God? How can we know we love God’s children?
2. Do you agree that “keeping God’s commandments is not difficult”? Think of ways this might be true.
3. If “the world” does not refer to the physical items of our daily existence, but instead that which distracts us from God, what are ways we can use our faith to overcome the forces and influences of the world in our lives? What are some examples of the world invading our lives?
4. How has God borne witness to his Son? (Read Matthew 27:50-54, Luke 3:21-22, Acts 1:1-8, 1 John 5:6-12.)

**Read 1 John 5:13-21.**

5. If you are a believer, have you ever questioned the certainty of your salvation and eternal life with God? How might 1 John 5:4-5, 11-13, and 18 inform the certainty of your personal faith regarding God’s promises?

6. Regarding prayer, do you feel confident that God will always give us exactly what we ask for? How might we unravel the answered versus unanswered prayer dilemma? (vv. 14-15)
  
7. John underlines the importance of prayer when he admonishes us to “pray for fellow believers who are sinning...and God will give that person life.” But he then brings up the issue of “a sin that leads to death.” Do any of the verses in this passage offer any clues as to what that sin might be?
  
8. Throughout this book John stresses the fact that Jesus, God’s Son, came to us in human form and not as pure spirit alone. Why is this important? How does it make a difference for us that Jesus came to us as a flesh and blood human being?
  
9. This is such a hopeful chapter, yet John throws out a final caution when he abruptly ends his letter with the exhortation “Dear children, guard yourselves from idols!”
  - (a) What do you think John means by “idols”? (v. 21)
  
  - (b) What are some idols in your life you should guard against? What steps do you take to do that?

## Lesson 15

## 2 John

**Memorable Verse:** “Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son, in truth and love.” 2 John 1:3 (ESV)

### Read 2 John 1:1-6.

1. Who wrote this letter and to whom is it addressed? (See I John 5:13)
2. Describe what John is rejoicing over and what he is requesting.
3. All through this letter, John connects or combines truth and love.
  - (a) Why is it important to show both truth and love?
  - (b) Give some examples of situations where it is hard to combine these qualities.
4. Describe the connection between loving one another and keeping God’s commandments. How does keeping His commandments show love?
5. How would you further describe loving one another based on the teachings of Jesus?  
Matthew 5:43-48 -

John 13:34-35 -

John 14:15 -

John 15:12-14 -

### Read 2 John 7-9.

6. A deceiver can be defined as someone who misleads you to believe something that’s not true. This could be a person, antichrist, or Satan.
  - (a) In practical terms, how do we “watch ourselves” so that we are not deceived?
  - (b) Do these verses imply we can lose our salvation? Or only our reward?

(c) What difference does it make how we interpret this?

7. Describe the difference between the terms salvation and rewards?

Luke 14:13-14 –

Romans 6:23 -

1 Corinthians 3:14 –

Ephesians 2:8-9 -

8. Why is the incarnation and second coming of Christ so central to the truth of Christianity?

9. In verse 9, the “teaching of Christ” can mean either, “the teaching about Christ,” i.e., that He is the incarnation of God (v.7), OR “Christ’s teaching,” possibly referring to the command to love one another (John 15:12,17). Which do you think it is, and why?

10. Why is it challenging to have a relationship with God if our view of Christ is wrong?

11. Share the results of “abiding in Christ.” Recount practices you have used to personally “abide in Christ.” Encourage each other by sharing some of these practices.

**Read 2 John 10.**

Verse 10 doesn’t sound very friendly. (“your house” probably refers to the church service, where the individual would bring a teaching, not to individual hospitality.)

12. How are we to respond to those who do not abide in God’s love? Why should we treat such people this way, especially in light of the command to love one another? What is the danger if we don’t?

**Read through the whole letter for context.**

1. What do you notice about John the Elder's relationship with Gaius?

**Read 3 John 1-8.**

2. List the good qualities which Gaius has already demonstrated.
3. People who had visited Gaius's church told John about Gaius's love (v. 6) and that he is walking in the truth (v. 3). What would you like people to report about you?
4. Summarize John's message on hospitality which, in this case, was for those who have gone out for the sake of the name of Jesus.
5. Compare the instructions and motivations for hospitality in 2 John 10-11 and 3 John 5-8.
6. This letter was written in an era when there were few inns, and they were sketchy. Personal hospitality was a prized virtue. Where do we see the need for welcome in today's culture?
7. What obstacles can hinder our welcome and hospitality?

**Read 3 John 9-15.**

8. What has Diotrephes been doing and what can we infer about his motives?

9. How has internal strife damaged Gaius's church and the spread of the gospel?

10. Diotrephes is not a false teacher like those discussed in 2 John.

(a) What different danger does he bring to the church?

(b) In what ways can a Diotrephes attitude creep into our lives?

(c) How can we stop it from growing?

11. Diotrephes has been practicing evil in his leadership (although that sounds harsh to us).

(a) Why might John give Gaius the command of verse 11?

(b) When have you seen a situation where the response to wrongdoing became wrong itself?

(c) How can we be instruments of peace in tense situations rather than enflaming them?

**Memorable Verse:** “The revelation of Jesus Christ...Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” Revelation 1:1a and 3 (NIV)

**Read Revelation 1:1-8.**

1. In the first two verses John tells us who this book is about. Who is it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does this book serve as a testimony? How and why are we blessed if we read, hear, and take to heart what is written?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. John’s writings often begin and end with the person of Jesus. What do we learn about Jesus’ characteristics and actions as described in these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How will Jesus come back?

**Read Revelation 1:9-20.**

5. Where is John as he writes this? Imagine and describe the scene, the day, his circumstances, his state of mind, and the task he is given.



6. Jesus appears in His glory. Describe what John sees and what he hears.
7. What is John's reaction to this vision? How do you think you would react in the same circumstances?
8. In this chapter we are introduced to the number seven, a symbol of perfection or completeness. List the groups of seven items referred to in this chapter.
9. The seven lampstands are identified as the seven churches John is to write to. In what ways can a church body or ministry (for example, Women in the Word Bible study) function as a lampstand in the world today?
10. How might this vision of Jesus in the midst of the churches bring comfort to the suffering believers receiving this book? Is it a comfort to you today? How?

Bible Project Poster for Revelation is on Page 76

### Review 3

1. How does God's love motivate you to love others? Review 1 John 4:11-12 and 19-20.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Choose at least **three** of the following references. Review the major tests of genuine Christianity according to 1 John 3-4. How can we use these in today's world?
  - (a) 1 John 3:10
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) 1 John 3:24
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (c) 1 John 4:2-3
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (d) 1 John 4:5-6
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (e) 1 John 4:7-8
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (f) 1 John 4:13
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (g) 1 John 4:15
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. John ends his first letter with the words "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols."
  - (a) Talk about the persistent "idols" in your own

(b) How do you guard yourself against these idols?

4. In John 5:20, we read that “the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true”(NIV).

(a) How has Jesus given us understanding?

(b) How does this work itself out in your life?

5. John warns of deceivers who deny the truth about Jesus (2 John 7). How would you describe the deceivers we encounter today?

6. Paul was grateful for the financial aid he received from the Christians in Philippi (Philippians 4:14-19). John commends the missionaries who don't request aid from those with whom they share the gospel (3 John 7). Discuss the difference in these circumstances and why both are acceptable.





## Lesson 18

## Revelation 2

Read Revelation 2:1-7 and fill out the “Ephesus” section in the chart on the next page.

***Ephesus was a church that had lost its first love.***

1. (a) How serious is “losing your first love” for Christ in the life of a church?
- (b) How serious is it in a Christian’s personal life and where does it lead?
- (c) What two things does Jesus say will renew the church’s “first love”?
- (d) Record Jesus’ promise to those who overcome.

Read Revelation 2:8-11 and fill out the “Smyrna” section in the chart.

***Smyrna was noted for emperor worship.***

2. (a) Why might Christians in Smyrna be under unusual pressure to deny their faith?
- (b) How might Jesus’ statement about himself strengthen their faithfulness?
- (c) How does Jesus’ “I know” strengthen you? (v.9)

Read Revelation 2:12-17 and fill out the “Pergamum” section in the chart.

***Pergamum was noted for emperor worship and temple prostitution.***

3. (a) How had this church responded to these cultural and political temptations?
- (b) What gifts are promised to overcomers, and why are they significant in this case?

Read Revelation 2:18-29 and fill out the “Thyatira” section in the chart.

***Jezebel was an Old Testament queen and has become a symbol of spiritual adultery and idolatry.***

4. In what ways was the so-called “prophetess” in Thyatira like Jezebel?
5. Although this seems to be a godly and loving church, Jesus rebukes them for tolerating evil in their midst.
  - (a) In what areas has some tolerance helped to reach “outsiders”?
  - (b) In what areas are Christians and churches today too tolerant?

6. Think about Jesus affirming, rebuking, warning, and making promises to believers. How does his example guide us as we try to help someone who seems ready to cave under pressure?

Read each section and record your comments on the chart. (Write NONE if there is no information for a square.) Share your answers in your small group as you discuss each section in this lesson. If you are not sure how to answer, leave the space blank. You will find a map of the seven churches to whom Paul wrote on page 70.

<b><u>Church</u></b>	<b>Ephesus Rev. 2:1-7</b>	<b>Smyrna Rev. 2:8-11</b>	<b>Pergamum Rev. 2:12-17</b>	<b>Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29</b>
<b>Description of Christ</b>				
<b>Church praised</b>				
<b>Church rebuked</b>				
<b>Church warned</b>				
<b>Promise for overcoming</b>				
<b>Like today's churches or Christians.</b>				

## Lesson 19

## Revelation 3

**Read Revelation 3:1-6 and fill out the “Sardis” section in the chart on the next page.**

1. Jesus says that the reality of the church at Sardis differs from its reputation (“you have a name...”). Why is this a serious problem?

(a) How is it possible for us as Christian women to be outwardly successful and busy with religious activity, but lack spiritual life and power?

(b) How can we remedy this?

**Read Revelation 3:7-13 and fill out the “Philadelphia” section in the chart.**

2. This church seemed weak and “unsuccessful,” but Jesus offers them only praise and promises.

(a) Why would they be encouraged by Jesus’ promise of an open door of opportunity?

(b) Review the titles Jesus gives himself in verse 7, and comment on how they might encourage believers in every age and situation.

(c) How do these descriptions encourage you in your circumstances today?

**Read Revelation 3:14-22 and fill out the “Laodicea” section in the chart.**

***Laodicea’s neighboring city Heiropolis had hot springs, and her southern neighbor Colosse had refreshing cool springs. A six-mile aqueduct brought Laodicea only lukewarm, tepid water.***

3. How does this information help you understand what Jesus is saying?

***Laodicea was also famous for its wealth, its woolen cloth, and for creating a valuable eye salve.***

4. What words does Jesus use to describe the Laodicean Christians and how does his evaluation differ from what they thought of themselves?



5. What are some of the signs of being lukewarm in our personal lives and in our churches?

Read each section and record your comments on the chart. (Write NONE if there is no information for a square.) Share your answers in your small group as you discuss each section in this lesson. If you are not sure how to answer, leave the space blank.

<b><u>Church</u></b>	<b>Sardis Rev. 3:1-6</b>	<b>Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13</b>	<b>Laodicea Rev. 3:14-22</b>
<b>Description of Christ</b>			
<b>Church praised</b>			
<b>Church rebuked</b>			
<b>Church warned</b>			
<b>Promise for overcoming</b>			
<b>Like today's churches or Christians.</b>			

**Memorable Verse:** “You are worthy, our Lord and God (4:11) Worthy is the Lamb to receive power...honor and glory and praise.”(5:12) Revelation 4:11 and 5:12 (NIV)

**Read Revelation 4:1-11.**

1. What impresses you most about the images of God’s throne room?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do we learn about worship in this chapter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. The praise and worship of God focuses on what qualities?

**Read Revelation 5:1-14.**

4. John is told the Lion of Judah has triumphed and is able to open the scroll. What does he see when he turns to look at the Lion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Discuss why the powerful Lion of Judah could triumph only because He is also the sacrificial Passover Lamb of Golgotha?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. The ultimate victory of all time was brought about through voluntary sacrificial defeat. How can this view of power and victory guide us when we find ourselves in conflict with others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. The praise and worship of Jesus the Lamb focuses on what qualities?

8. Stop the lesson and spend time meditating on the worth of our God and on Jesus. When you feel finished, write a short note of thanks to them.

**Read Revelation 6:1-17.**

9. Record the events when the Lamb opens each of the first six seals?

1st seal -

2nd seal -

3rd seal -

4th seal -

5th seal -

6th seal -

10. What comfort/discomfort do you feel when you read the interaction with the martyrs in the 5th seal?

11. These events may be actual physical happenings or symbolic images of a variety of disasters, but it is clear people understand this is the judgment of God.

(a) Discuss their reactions.

(b) What other choice can they make?

## Lesson 21

## Revelation 21-22

**Memorable Verse:** “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say ‘Come.’... ‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” Revelation 22:17, 20 (ESV)

### **Read Revelation 21:1-8.**

1. How do the two declarations from the throne reveal that this is the culmination of the story began in Genesis 1-3?
2. What are the results of God’s full unmediated presence with His people?

### **Read Revelation 21:9-22:5.**

3. Discuss the layer upon layer of beautiful images used to envision the New Jerusalem.
4. How can we prepare ourselves to enter/to be this beautiful image of God’s people?
5. John merrily mixes his metaphors as he describes the people of God in these chapters. What is the main message of each image?
  - (a) A wedding -
  - (b) A city -
  - (c) A garden -

(d) A throne room/temple –

6. Both the sea and the night are often presented as places of, or sources of danger and evil. (example: Revelation 13:1) Whether literal, figurative, or both, what qualities are being highlighted by their absence?

**Read Revelation 22:6-21.**

7. Verses 7-9 echo Revelation 1:3 reminding us that this book is not a puzzle to be solved but the Word of God to be obeyed. In what ways has our study called you into a deeper obedience to God?
8. Look over the names and words of Jesus in this chapter. What stands out to you?
9. Summarize the interaction between John and the angel in verses 8-9.
10. Comment on the longing and the promise in verses 17-20.

Take some time to let your soul dwell on the beauty and joy of our future. No matter the shadow or darkness of your present, this glorious light is your eternal future. Come, Lord Jesus, Come.



*Women in the Word*

# *Spring Brunch*

FOOD, FRIENDS AND  
MUSIC

APRIL 23, 2024

# Appendix





## **A Peek at the Roman World**

Dutch organizational anthropologist Geert Hofstede spent years researching social values around the globe. He designed a framework (Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory) which is used to understand the differences in culture across countries. There are six different dimensions with each having a scale which slides between high and low. This is helpful for anyone involved in international relations (business, finance, missions, etc.). These are cultural differences. One is not right and another wrong. They are just different. That being said, all cultures do have ways in which they more naturally align with or violate God's design for life and community. Sometimes knowing the difference between, "different, but okay" and "out-of-line" takes prayer and discernment. There are obvious limitations with such broad categories, so this theory should not be pushed too far.

This theory also helps us understand history since cultures throughout time have had many of these qualities. It is interesting to consider the ways that some of these have changed over the last 100 years in our country. There are three dimensions which are especially helpful in understanding ways in which the 1<sup>st</sup> century world was very different from our world.

### **The power distance index (PDI): the nature and distribution of power in society**

This describes the degree of inequality that exists – and is accepted – between people with and without power. In a high PDI group, the power will be concentrated in one person or a small group of people. Society accepts an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power and people understand their place in the system. A low PDI score means that power is shared and is widely dispersed. Society members view themselves as almost equals to leaders and do not accept "pushy" strong leadership. Rome (like much of the ancient world) had a high PDI score. All power was in the hands of the emperor and those who assisted him or had higher level government jobs (3% of the population). All levels of society had their own system of rank and place. We get a glimpse of this in the relationship between Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus.

### **The individualism vs. collectivism dimension (IDV): the strength of the ties that people have to others within their community.**

Individualistic societies have loose ties that often only relate an individual to his/her immediate family and close friends. They emphasize "I" versus "we". Individualism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on attaining personal goals. People take less responsibility for others' actions and outcomes. High value is placed on people's time and their need for privacy and freedom. There is an expectation of individual rewards for hard work.

Its counterpart, collectivism, describes a society in which tightly integrated relationships tie extended families and others into in-groups. Loyalty to the group is matched by the group's defense of its people. They emphasize "we" versus "I". Collectivism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on the goals and well-being of the group. People take responsibility for one another's well-being. Maintaining harmony among group members overrides other issues. Violating the group boundaries by crossing into other groups is frowned upon.

The 1<sup>st</sup> century was strongly collectivist. This was an advantage as Paul and other traveling evangelists had an instant welcome as they went from town to town with their "in-group"—the Jews first and later other Christians. It was a disadvantage as the Christian message tore down accepted boundaries between Jew and Gentile or free and slave making many people

uncomfortable and suspicious. Were the Christians trying to destroy their way of life and their communities?

**Masculinity Versus Femininity (MAS): the differences in masculine/feminine qualities in a culture and in the distribution of roles between men and women.** This is sometimes called “tough or tender” as “masculinity” and “femininity” have changed connotations since the 1980’s and 1990’s when Hofstede was designing his model. In strong masculine or feminine cultures both men and women will display the dominate characteristics though in varying degrees.

Masculinity in a culture refers to the degree to which what Hofstede called masculine values, (achievement, performance, success, money, competition) prevail over what he called feminine values (quality of life, maintaining warm personal relationships, service, care for the weak, preserving the environment). Strongly masculine cultures seek achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. They usually have distinct gender roles—men do \_\_\_\_ and women do \_\_\_\_.

Feminine cultures have more fluid gender roles—men or women do \_\_\_\_\_. They are more nurturing and more concerned with the quality of life. Greater importance is placed on good relationships, collaboration, and cooperation. Workplace flexibility and work-life balance may be important.

Roman culture was highly masculine by this definition as far as their emphasis on achievement and success although relationships were very important. Who you knew or had connections with was of highest importance. Relationships were often the means to success.

To understand the letters we will be studying, it is helpful to begin to look through 1<sup>st</sup> century eyes. A greater understanding of what the authors meant and what their readers heard will enable us to more fully see the principals involved and more wisely apply them to our time and place.

## Marriage and the Family in the First Century

Adapted from material by the ct:

The cultural background against which the marriage commands exist is important. When viewed in comparison to their cultural neighbors, it's clear that the good news about Jesus undermined patriarchy by insisting that all people were of equal status in the Messiah's family. This opened up new cultural possibilities for women and slaves in the early Christian communities. The household codes of Paul and Peter can feel as if they are mandating a patriarchal ideal. In reality, they are undermining its basis with the upside-down value system of the Gospel. Here are some examples of the prevailing cultural view of women at the time:

"Of household management we have seen that there are three parts - one is the rule of a master over slaves, which has been discussed already, another of a father, and the third of a husband. A husband and father, we saw, rules over wife and children, both free, but the rule differs; the rule over his children being royal, and the ruler over his wife is based on natural constitution. For although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female, just as the elder and full-grown is superior to the younger and more immature." ARISTOTLE, POLITICS, 1:12 (Greek philosopher and author)

"The woman... is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be obedient, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for God has given authority to the man." JOSEPHUS, AGAINST APION 2:24 (Jewish historian)

Although about Paul's writing in Ephesians 5, the following applies to Peter's writing as well:

"This instruction to the husband/patriarch is completely at odds with contemporary household codes... First, husbands are commanded to "love" their wives, a command that appears in no other contemporary household codes... which focus on the proper ordering of household units by the patriarch for his own comfort and ease. Second, husbands are not to dominate their subordinate wives, but their love is to imitate the self-sacrificial love of Christ. Paul directly confronts the system of domination in the wider culture... where the great authority that is invested in patriarchs over their entire households was often exercised with conniving manipulation."

TIMOTHY GOMBIS, THE RADICALLY NEW HUMANITY

"Ephesians 5 grounds our roles in marriage not on gendered psychology but on Christ-centered theology... We will never understand the Bible's call on men and women unless we see Jesus as the ultimate man. He had strength to command storms, summon angel armies, and defeat death. But his arms held little children, his words elevated women, and his hands reached out to heal the sick. Jesus, beaten and humiliated out of love for his people, was and is the perfect man. No one who uses the Bible's teaching on marriage to justify chauvinism, abuse, or denigration of women has looked at Jesus." REBECCA MCLLAUGHLIN, CONFRONTING CHRISTIANITY

## Slavery in the First Century and Biblical Teaching

Slave labor was the engine which powered the Roman empire. Unlike US slavery which was very race based, any one could become a slave in the first century—the rich and powerful whose city lost a battle to Rome, the farmer whose crops had a bad year, or the very poor who could find no job to feed themselves. Key slaves for the very rich had a lot of power themselves. Tutors, doctors, managers of estates might all be slaves who lived in comfortable settings. However, most slavery was as bad as our stereotypes. The master had full power and the death of a slave came with no consequences. Slave revolts or anything that seemed to threaten the acceptance of slavery was met with swift and violent action by the Roman government. The great slave war of 73-71BC which was considered a successful revolt ended with 60,000 slaves being crucified.

*“In urban areas a significant percentage of all inhabitants were owned by another. In the 1st century, between 25-40% of the almost one million inhabitants were slaves.”*

WALTER SCHEIDEL. 2005. 'HUMAN MOBILITY IN ROMAN ITALY, II: THE SLAVE POPULATION', JOURNAL OF ROMAN STUDIES 95: 64-79

Adapted from 1 & 2 PETER AND JUDE BIBLE STUDIES by N.T. Wright:

In the ancient world, more or less everything that today is done by electricity, gas and motorized engines was done by slaves. Quite a few Christians were slaves as you might expect granted that the gospel of Jesus gives dignity and self-worth to those who believe in it. Peter addresses these Christian slaves... He invites followers of Jesus to inhabit Jesus' extraordinary story: to embrace it as their own, and, being healed and rescued by those events, to make them the pattern of their lives as well. The key to it all is that the crucifixion of the Messiah was the most unjust and wicked act the world had ever seen. Here was the one man who deserved nothing but praise and gratitude, and they rejected him, beat him up and killed him...

Peter isn't simply recommending that people remain passive while suffering violence. He is urging them to realize that somehow, strangely, the sufferings of the Messiah are not only the means by which we are ourselves rescued from our own sin. They are the means, when extended through the life of his people, by which the world itself may be brought to a new place.

While Peter calls us to a new outlook on our own sufferings, he also calls us to do good which can mean relieving the suffering of others.

Within the church, the message was “In Christ there is no slave or free”. There is ample evidence of slaves being respected and given leadership roles in the church. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Christians were a very tiny minority (estimated to be under .01% of the population) who were viewed with suspicion and sometimes hatred. They had no social voice. Four hundred years later when the emperor became a Christian, they did speak out against slavery especially the sexual exploitation of slaves. It took many years but slavery was outlawed in Christian Europe—only to resurface with colonial expansion much later. It may seem slow but God does His deepest work through heart changes that lead to action change—in individuals and cultures.

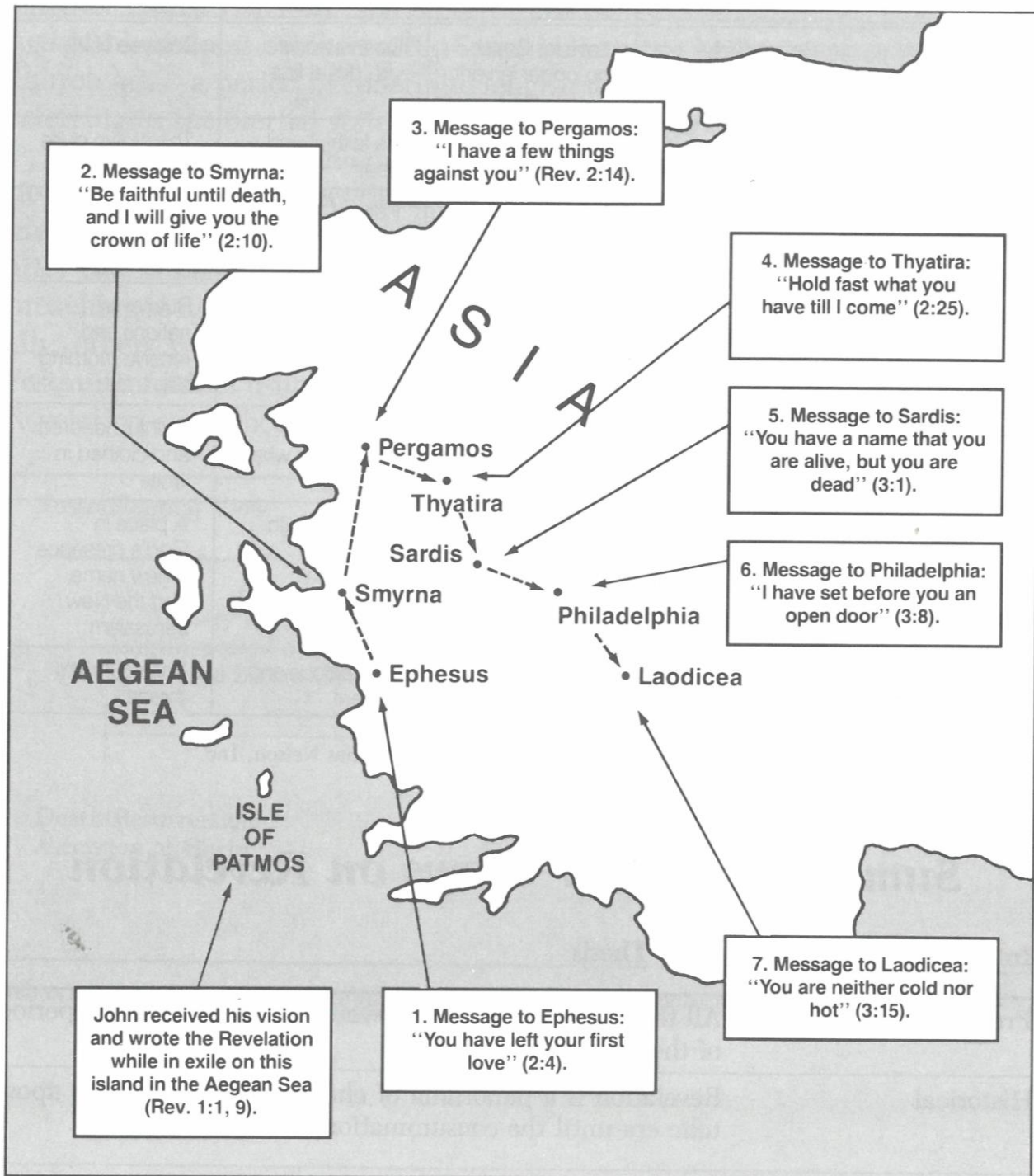
## **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
Born of the Virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, dead, and buried:  
He descended into hell;  
The third day he rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
The holy catholic church;  
The Communion of Saints;  
The Forgiveness of sins;  
The Resurrection of the body,  
And the Life everlasting.  
Amen.

# The Seven Churches



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**THE MISSION:**  
GET PHILEMON TO FORGIVE ONESIMUS AND EMBRACE HIM AS A BROTHER

**THE BACKSTORY:**  
ONESIMUS FINDS PAUL & BECOMES A CHRISTIAN  
SEE VV 1-2: COLLOSSIANS 1-7

**EXPLOSIVE!**  
PHILEMON BECOMES A CHRISTIAN  
SEE VV 17

**WRITTEN FROM PRISON**  
PAUL'S LETTER  
-A POST-  
I KNOW THAT YOU'LL OBTAIN YOUR TASK, & THE GUY WHO SHOT ME!

**PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON**

**vv21-25 FINAL GREETING**

**THE ONLY LETTER WHERE PAUL DOESN'T TALK ABOUT JESUS' DEATH & RESURRECTION, BECAUSE HE'S ALIVING IT OUT.**

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOOD NEWS ARE PERSONAL, BUT NEVER PRIVATE. JESUS' FAMILY IS A FAMILY WHO SHARE TOGETHER IN GOD'S HEALING MERCY.**

**vv1-7 OPENING PRAYER**

PHILEMON, I THANK GOD FOR YOUR LOVE & FAITHFULNESS. (vv4-5)

"I PRAY THAT THE PARTNERSHIP THAT SPRINGS FROM YOUR FAITH THAT EFFECTIVELY LEAD YOU TO RECOGNIZE ALL THE GOOD THINGS AT WORK IN US, LEADING US INTO THE MESSIAH." (v.6)

**GREEK: KOINONIA - SHARING, MUTUAL PARTICIPATION**

**ALL OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS ARE EQUAL PARTNERS WHO SHARE IN THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE & LOVE.**

**FOR PAUL, KOINONIA IS NOT JUST AN IDEA.**

**IT'S SOMETHING YOU DO!**

ONESIMUS LEAVES PHILEMON & FLEES  
ONESIMUS FINDS PAUL & BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

**vv8-20 PAUL'S REQUEST**

**THE BOLD REQUEST:**  
"RECEIVE ONESIMUS BACK, NO LONGER AS A SLAVE, BUT AS A BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD."

**ONESIMUS HAS BECOME PAUL'S CHILD**  
"THIS CONFLICT MUST BE RESOLVED."

**WHY SHOULD PHILEMON DO THIS?**  
IF YOU ARE TRULY A PARTNER (GK: KOINONIA) WITH ME, THEN WELCOME ONESIMUS AS IF HE WERE ME. IF HE'S WRONGED YOU OR DAMAGES YOU ANYTHING, CHANGE IT TO ME - I'LL REPAY IT. (vv17-19)

**1 RECONCILIATION:**  
"GOD HAS RECONCILING TO HIMSELF." (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

**2 KOINONIA:**  
THEY ARE EQUAL BEFORE GOD, SHARING IN THE SAME NEED FOR FORGIVENESS.

**SLAVE or FREE, BUT THE MESSIAH IS ALL & IS IN ALL. (COLLOSSIANS 3:1)**

**BROTHERS IN THE MESSIAH**

**IN GOD'S NEW FAMILY PEOPLE ARE NOT GIVEN OR JEALOUS, DISRESPECTED OR UNRESPECTED.**

**NOT COUNTING TO HIMSELF**  
"GOD HAS RECONCILING TO HIMSELF." (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

**ONESIMUS LEAVES PHILEMON & FLEES**  
ONESIMUS FINDS PAUL & BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

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**1 PETER**

**1:1-2 GREETING**

HELLO, GOD'S PEOPLE WHO ARE CHOSEN & EXILED (COLOSS. 3:12)

OLD TESTAMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF ABRAHAM & ISRAEL

GENILES WHO NOW BELONG TO THE FAMILY OF ABRAHAM (ROM. 9:24-26)

**1:3-12 SONG OF PRAISE**

TRADE GOD WHO CALLED US TO BE BORN AGAIN INTO A LIVING HOPE (1:3)

NEW HOPE  
NEW IDENTITY  
NEW FAMILY

SUFFERING IS A PURIFYING FIRE THAT CAN DEEPEN OUR FAITH (1:7)

**1:13-2:10 A NEW FAMILY IDENTITY**

TO RECOGNIZE CHRISTIANITY AS A MINORITY

HOSTILITY & HARASSMENT (2:12-17)

YOU ARE A ROCK! (1:1)

SIMON PETER (ARABIC: KEFAS) GREEK: (PETER)

ONE OF JESUS' FIRST DISCIPLES

KEY LEADER IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH (ACTS 1-10)

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE A MISUNDERSTOOD MINORITY, LIVING UNDER THE RULE OF A DIFFERENT KING.

PERSECUTION OFFERS A CHANCE TO SHOW OTHERS THE GENEROUS LOVE OF JESUS.

**2:11-4:11 SUFFERING AS A WITNESS TO JESUS**

THE PROBLEM: HOUSES ARE SPECIFIED ABOUT A LEADERSHIP THE PATRIARCHAL GOVS

THE RESPONSE: CHRISTIANS ARE LIBERATED TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES

THEIR THINGS: VINDICATION

PERSECUTED • MURDERED

VINDICATED • EXALTED

**4:12-5:9 SUFFERING & FUTURE HOPE**

REJOICE WHEN PEOPLE PERSECUTE YOU BECAUSE OF ME (1:12-17)

JESUS' PROMISE

LEADERS TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH (5:1-5)

THE REAL ENEMY (5:6-7)

"RESIST EVIL WITH FIRM FAITHFULNESS." (5:9)

**5:10-14 CLOSING**

MY GOD STRENGTHEN YOU!

ROMA

BABYLON

JACOBITE FOR CONQUIT RULES (CITE JEREMIAH 50-51)

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE "BORN" FROM THEIR THE HOPE

created by the Bible Project



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# THE LETTER OF JUDE

**JESUS' BROTHERS**  
(MATTHEW 13:55; MARK 6:3)

JAMES   JOSEPH   SIMON   JUDAH

COULD WE?!

**AFTER THE RESURRECTION, THEY BECAME DISCIPLES, LEADERS AND MISSIONARIES.**  
(ACTS 1:4)

**THESE ARE THE ULTIMATE!**

AND THESE ARE GOOD TOO!

**GOD'S GRACE DEMANDS A WHOLE-LIFE RESPONSE**

• JUDAH DOESN'T FOCUS ON THEOLOGY, BUT ON MORAL CHOICES

• *LOVING JESUS = OBTAINING JESUS* (SEE JOHN 17:15)

**ALSO AKA: JUDAH**

GREEK: IOUDAS

HEBREW: YEHUDAH

**vv1-4 OPENING CHARGE**

vv1-3 CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH...

HAD THIS BEEN PLANNED?

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

BECAUSE OF THE CORRUPT TEACHERS

WE ARE FREE IN CHRIST!

EVERYTHING IS NOW ALLOWABLE!

UNHONEST??

THEY DISTORT GOD'S GRACE AS A LICENSE TO SIN...

... & REJECT THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS.

**vv5-19 ACCUSATION OF CORRUPT LEADERS**

vv5-10 3 OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES: REBELLION & DIVINE JUSTICE

1. SARKIS UNBORN: REBELLION (NUMBERS 14)
2. MEN OF SODOM (GENESIS 19)
3. ENOCH'S TESTAMENT OF JUDAS (REBELS AGAINST GOD'S AUTHORITY, SEXUALLY IMMORAL, REJECT GOD'S MESSENGERS)

vv11-19 AN ANCIENT WARNING

THE END IS NEAR!

1 ENOCH ch 1

ISAIAH 66:15-16

ZECHARIAH 14:5

DEUTERONOMY 33:2

QUOTING FROM:

SEE GENESIS 5

**vv20-25 CLOSING CHARGE**

vv20-21 CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH...

METAPHOR: COMMUNITY OF JESUS-TEMPLE

STAYING ALERT

LOVE GOD WITHOUT OBEDIENCE

THE MOST = THE GOOD HOLY FAITH

THE ONLY GOD WHO CAN KEEP YOU FROM SINNING



