



LOVE
ONE ANOTHER

1 JOHN

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1 JOHN

*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,
that you may know that you have eternal life.*

1 John 5:13

The Apostle John was Jesus' closest and most faithful friend. No one was closer to Jesus than John. He was with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry. He saw Jesus heal multitudes and walk on water. He was there when Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek to betray Him. At the foot of the cross, John watched Jesus breathe His last breath. He saw the empty tomb and watched Jesus ascend into heaven!

John was an **eyewitness** to the most important events in history.

Now a well seasoned saint, the Apostle John sits down to write a letter of encouragement to believers who are struggling with their faith. Don't you love it when someone sends you a card, just to tell you they're thinking about you and to encourage you? That is 1 John.

For generations, 1 John has served as a source of comfort and encouragement for believers all over the world. And you too will find your faith built and encouraged as you read and study 1 John.

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Dear Community Group Leaders,

Thank you so much for opening your homes, hearts and lives to minister to the precious people of Destiny Church! More than ever, I feel like we are **partners** together in the Grace of God. I thank God for you every day and feel privileged to serve along side of you in Jesus' Church on Jesus' Mission.

I wanted to highlight several resources that have been helpful for me in my study of 1 John. First, I want to give honor where it is due. Some of the material in this discussion guide and devotional has been adapted from these resources. Secondly, I wanted to recommend them to you as I believe they will bless you in your continued studies.

- The NIV Application Commentary
- ESV Study Bible
- The Letters of John (Stott)
- Be Real (Wiersbe)
- 1 John Study Guide (MacArthur)
- Exalting Jesus in 1 John (Akin)

I also want to thank the members of the Destiny Research Team: Josiah Hodgett, Stephanie Escobedo and Benjamin Gongora. It is through their faithful study and research that this discussion guide was produced. On the next page there is a brief bio on each of them.

I couldn't be more excited about this series and how God is going to use it to help us bear good fruit in His Kingdom for His glory! Thanks for coming on this journey.

In Christ,



Pastor Matt Bell

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1 JOHN

About The Authors



MATT BELL is the Lead Pastor of Destiny Church in San Antonio, TX. He studied at International Bible College then earned an AA degree in communications. He completed his Biblical studies with a BA from Texas University of Theology.

He enjoys teaching the Bible and spending time with his wife Heather and their four children.



JOSIAH HODGETT is a bi-vocational minister serving in Shell Lake, WI. He serves as a volunteer pastor at Shell Lake Full Gospel Church and manages the home office of the International Ministerial Association (IMA). Vocationally, Josiah is a Data & Technology Specialist for the Shell Lake Public School System.

Josiah is married to Adelle (Fredrickson) Hodgett, and they have three girls - Aria (4), Adalynn (2) and Amelia who was just born in July.



STEPHANIE ESCOBEDO is a former member of Destiny Church in San Antonio, TX. She graduated from Kings Bible Institute (KBI) in 2017. She has a BA in Psychology and completed her Master of Business Administration in March of 2018.

She currently resides in Monterey, CA where she works full time and is an active member of Calvary Chapel. She spends her free time outside enjoying the mountains and the ocean.



Additional collaboration and supplemental content provided by **BENJAMIN GONGORA**. Benjamin has a BA in Criminal Justice from Campbell University and graduated Kings Bible Institute (KBI) in 2015.

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1 John Sermon Schedule (September - November 2018)

1. 9/9/18 - 1 John 1:1-4
Jesus' Best Friend
2. 9/16/18 - 1 John 1:5-10
God Is Light
3. 9/23/18 - 1 John 2:1-6
Jesus Our Advocate
4. 9/30/18 - 1 John 2:7-11
A New Commandment
5. 10/7/18 - 1 John 2:12-17
Do Not Love The World
6. 10/14/18 - 1 John 2:18-27
Living In The Last Hour
7. 10/21/18 - 1 John 2:28-3:10
Children Of God
8. 10/28/18 - 1 John 3:11-24
From Death To Life
9. 11/4/18 - 1 John 4:1-6
Jesus Is Greater
10. 11/11/18 - 1 John 4:7-21
God Is Love
11. 11/18/18 - 1 John 5:1-5
Overcoming The World
12. 11/25/18 - 1 John 5:6-12
God's Testimony
13. 12/2/18 - 1 John 5:13-21
Eternity Secure (Confidence)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1 JOHN

Week of September 9, 2018

Jesus' Best Friend

1 John 1:1-4

1. Read 1 John 1:1-4

2. What are some things that we know about the Apostle John, the author of this book?
 - John was Jesus' best friend. There was no one closer to Jesus than John.
 - In John's Gospel, he is often referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."
 - John had a brother named James. Jesus gave them the nickname "Sons of Thunder."
 - John once asked if he could call down fire from heaven to destroy a village he was upset with (Luke 9:54).
 - Through his time with Jesus, John was transformed from a *Son of Thunder* to a *Father in the Faith*.
3. From these verses, what uniquely qualifies John to write about Jesus?
 - He was an eyewitness to all of Jesus' ministry.
 - He saw Jesus with his own eyes.
 - He heard Jesus with his own ears.
 - He touched Jesus with his own hands.
4. Why is John writing?
 - John is writing to testify about the eternal life which we can have through Jesus.
 - He's also writing so that we might share in the joy he has living in this eternal life through Jesus.
5. What is fellowship, and why is it important that we have it with God and others? How is fellowship different from simple friendship?
6. John says in verse 4 that his joy is being completed through the writing and sharing of his testimony. Have you experienced the joy of sharing your testimony with others?
 - Far too often we are afraid to share our testimony. We're worried what others might think about us. We're afraid we'll be judged. This condemnation we feel because of our past does not come from God (Romans 8:1). It's actually produced by a religious spirit, for we all have sinned (Romans 3:23).
 - Part of Christian fellowship is sharing about what God has done in your life. As you do that with both believers and nonbelievers, you'll experience incredible joy, just as the Apostle John is describing here.
7. In verses 1-4, John writes that he wants us to **know** this life, **share** this life, and **enjoy** this life. What can we do to grow in our knowing, sharing, and enjoying of the eternal life we have in Christ?

COMMUNITY GROUP: WEEKLY LEADER'S REPORT

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Off Topic Discussion:

Additional comments or concerns:

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1 JOHN

Week of September 16, 2018

God Is Light

1 John 1:5-10

1. Read 1 John 1:5-10

2. What does it mean that God is light and that there is no darkness in Him?
 - God is perfectly righteous and holy. There isn't even a hint of sin or darkness in him at all. He is the source of everything good and just and pure.
3. What does it mean to walk in darkness?
4. What are some keys to walking in the light? How does this look practically?
 - Confessing and repenting of sins.
 - Continually seeking the Lord, even when we know we've messed up.
 - Fellowship with other believers.
 - Practicing the truth.
5. How does a right belief in Jesus help us to walk in the light?
6. What is sin and why do we need to be cleansed from it?
7. John says that we are to confess our sins and we will be forgiven (v. 9). How do you typically confess your sins? In what manner: alone silently to God in prayer, aloud in your room, only in prayer at church, or possibly to a trusted friend or mentor?
 - John emphasizes the importance of fellowship with one another. James 5:16 says to confess sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
 - Confession of sins is something that you should begin practicing in your life. How might this benefit you and also the body of Christ?
8. There are two confessions in this passage. The first confession is "I have sinned." The second confession is "I have not sinned." Take a moment to reflect on the result of each of these confessions.
 - I have sinned - result is forgiveness and cleansing.
 - I have not sinned - result is self deception, no truth in us, we call God a liar.

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1 JOHN

Week of September 23, 2018

Jesus Our Advocate

1 John 2:1-6

1. Read 1 John 2:1-6

2. Was there ever a time in your life when you believed (incorrectly) that a born-again Christian would never sin again? Why did you believe that? What changed your mind?
3. What is the hope for us when we do sin? What does it mean that Jesus is our advocate?
4. John's desire is that we would not have sin in our lives. Why should we share that same desires for ourselves and others?
 - The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). When we sin, it results in death, the opposite of the eternal life Christ gives us.
5. How can you be sure that you know God? Is there a way to know for sure?
 - John says we can know for sure that we know God by examining the fruit of our lives. (vs. 3-4)
6. How should we as Christians relate to people who claim to know Jesus, but do not keep his commands?
 - We should prayerfully confront them in love.
 - Prayerfully, because we need God's help and guidance.
 - Confront in love, because we fear for their souls, and desire them to repent of their sins and walk in the light.
7. How is God's love perfected in us as we keep His word.
 - Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God and that the 2nd greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. As you keep these commandments, God's love is perfected in you.
8. John bottom lines it for us in verse 6. He says that we ought to live our lives the same way Jesus lived His life. What does this look like for you?
 - Jesus lived in submission to The Father (John 5:19, 12:49) empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 1:32).
 - Through the saving work of Jesus, we too can live in submission to The Father empowered by the Holy Spirit. This should be the aim of every Christian.

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1 JOHN

Week of September 30, 2018

A New Commandment

1 John 2:7-11

1. Read 1 John 2:7-11

2. In the previous passage, John addressed our love for God. Now he addresses our love for others in verses 7-11. How is John's command to love one another both old and new? How does this give weight to John's argument?
 - It's old in the sense that it was part of God's law in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). It's new in the sense that Jesus made this command part of His new covenant (John 13:34-35).
3. What is *new* about this *old* commandment?
 - First, we now have the ability to love others through Christ living inside of us.
 - Second, we now have the greatest example of love to follow. We now know what perfect love looks like. We are commanded to love like Jesus (John 13:34).
4. Can a person love God and not others? What if that person isn't a "people person" and is very uncomfortable socially?
 - As we mature in Christ, we often develop new, different desires. Even if we don't have an outgoing personality, we are still commanded to love one another.
5. What are some of the practical ways the New Testament tells us to love one another?
6. What does it mean that the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining? (v. 8)
 - Through the cross and resurrection, Jesus defeated Satan. The power of darkness has been broken. It is passing away. Now, through His Church, Jesus light is shining every day all over the earth. You are a part of this true light.
7. Here John draws the contrast between light and darkness, and love and hate. In verse 11, he says that for those who hate others the darkness is so deep, it actually blinds them. We have a choice, we can walk in the light of love, forgiving others. Or, we can stumble around blindly in the darkness, holding onto grudges, and living in hate. Chose today to forgive others, just as God in Christ has forgiven you.
 - Why does hatred blind us? What are we blind to? What can't we see?
 - Why does love illuminate? What do we see clearly through love that we cannot see if we have hate in our lives?

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1 JOHN

Week of October 7, 2018

Do Not Love The World

1 John 2:12-17

1. Read 1 John 2:12-17

2. What is significant about verses 12-14? What is it that we learn that sets us up to better understand John's message in verses 15-17?
 - Believers are forgiven.
 - Believers know the Father.
 - Believers are victors in the faith.
 - John encourages the church and us about our spiritual state before he warns us about the world.
3. In verse 12, John says that we have had our sins forgiven for His name's sake. Why is that important?
 - We must constantly be reminded that God has forgiven us because of who He is, not because of who we are or what we've done. Our salvation brings Christ glory.
4. Verse 15 says *do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* What does it mean to love the world and why are we commanded not to?
 - John is talking about the world's sinful value system that opposes God's word and God's ways. John goes on to list that value system in verse 16. This is different from John 3:16 which states that God loves the world (talking of people). God is very much concerned with the souls of humanity. And we should share in that love for people, while hating the sinful values that lead them to destruction.
5. What is the lust of the flesh? Give examples.
6. What is the lust of the eyes? Give examples.
7. What is the pride of possessions or the pride of life? Give examples.
8. Do you see any of these temptations at work in your own life? What can we learn from Jesus' example of overcoming temptation? (Matthew 4)
 - When tempted by Satan, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, refuted him with the scriptures. We must constantly fill ourselves with the word of God. By doing so, we can defeat every temptation in our lives.
9. John says that the world is passing away. What are some examples you see of this truth at work in our own culture today?

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1 JOHN

Week of October 14, 2018

Living In The Last Hour

1 John 2:18-27

1. Read 1 John 2:18-27

2. What does it mean that we are living in the last hour? (v. 18) How should this affect the way we live our lives?
3. Why is it important for Christians to have a firm understanding of what they believe and why they believe it?
 - Because there is an antichrist spirit at work in the world seeking to deceive believers (v. 26). We must know the truth to be able to spot the lie.
4. What does John mean by the term antichrist?
 - The word “christ” comes from the Greek word “christos” which means anointed one. It is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word “messiah.”
 - Basically antichrist means someone who denies that Jesus is the messiah, the savior God had promised to bring salvation. It can be a person or a spirit influencing a person.
5. How can we spot someone who is under the influence or control of this antichrist spirit?
 - John lists three characteristics of those under the control of the antichrist spirit:
 - i. He departs from the fellowship (vs. 18-19);
 - ii. He denies the faith (vs. 20-25);
 - iii. He tries to deceive the believer (vs. 26-29).
6. What is the significance of verse 23? How is this different from what many believe today?
 - The Christian faith holds tightly to the doctrine that Jesus is the only means by which we can be saved. If you don't have faith in Jesus, you don't have God.
 - *It's important to define the Biblical Jesus: eternal God become a man (the creator, not a created being), died in the place of sinners, resurrected from the dead, returning to judge the world. There are many who say they believe in Jesus, yet they deny these Biblical doctrines about Jesus, and therefore they believe in a false Jesus, or false gospel, which cannot save. A Muslim, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witness will all claim to believe in Jesus. Yet they all deny these Biblical doctrines.*
7. What are the main protections we have against false teachers and false teaching?
8. How can we practically put into practice verse 24, letting the gospel abide in us?

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1 JOHN

Week of October 21, 2018

Children of God

1 John 2:28-3:10

1. Read 1 John 2:28-3:10

2. How can you be confident when you meet God face-to-face one day ... either at His second coming or when you pass from this life into the next?
3. Why might a Christian not be confident at the thought of Jesus' second coming or at his or her death?
4. How do we abide in Christ? What does that mean?
5. What does it mean that someone is a child of God?
 - It means that they are born again. A Christian.
 - Until we are born again, we are not children of God. In fact, Jesus teaches that until we have faith in Him, we are actually children of the Devil (John 8:44-45).
6. What does it look like for you to practice righteousness?
7. How does knowing that God truly loves us as His children help motivate us to live a holy life?
8. What does John mean in verse 9 when he says "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning."? Is John saying that Christians will never sin?
 - John **IS NOT** saying that Christians will never sin. We know he is not saying that because just a few chapters earlier he taught that a person who says they never sin is a liar (1 John 1:8-10). He also taught that when we do sin, Jesus is our advocate (1 John 2:1).
 - John is talking about our default gear. Our home base. The bottom line motivations of our heart. He's not talking about a one-time offense, but rather a habitual, settled, lawless, and unrepentant disposition of your heart. In fact, one of the assurances of our salvation is that when we do sin, we are convicted by the Holy Spirit, and run to God in repentance.
9. How does memorizing scripture help keep a Christian from sinning?
 - **Psalm 37:31** - *The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.*
 - **Psalm 119:9** - *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*
 - **Psalm 119:11** - *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

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1 JOHN

Week of October 28, 2018

From Death To Life

1 John 3:11-24

1. **Read 1 John 3:11-24**
2. How do we know what true love is?
 - By looking at Jesus' example (v. 16)
3. What does John say the proof of love is found in?
 - Not in our words or our talk, but in our deeds and actions (v. 18).
4. How do you currently and actively demonstrate love for others, whether they are believers or not? What are practical ways or areas in which you can increase your love for others?
5. How important is it personally for you to love others? Are you or have you ever struggled with loving others? What has God spoken to you concerning loving others, or is currently speaking to you?
6. Is it possible to love others regardless of your feelings of love? In other words, can a person demonstrate love to another without necessarily having feelings of love for that person? Why or why not?
7. Why is hatred such a serious sin?
8. How does our willingness to love others reveal what is going on in our hearts?

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1 JOHN

Week of November 4, 2018

Jesus Is Greater

1 John 4:1-6

1. Read 1 John 4:1-6

2. According to this passage, why is it important that we pay careful attention to our spiritual lives and spirituality?
 - John says that we must test the spirits to see where they come from. Just because something is “spiritual” it does not mean that it is “Godly.” In fact, we should totally reject every form of vague or general spirituality. It isn’t from God and is demonic. John says that the only spiritual activity we should be involved in must be Jesus centered (v. 2).
3. How can we protect ourselves from false teachers? What role do pastors play in this protection? How might this emphasize the importance of selecting a pastor or church to become a member of?
4. Verse 2 says that every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. What does this mean? Is it possible for a person to confess a false version of Jesus?
 - John here is addressing the specific heresy that false teachers were deceiving people with in his day.
 - *(The heresy is called Gnosticism. In summary, Gnosticism says that humans are divine souls trapped in the ordinary physical (or material) world. They say that the world was made by an imperfect spirit. The imperfect spirit is thought to be the same as the God of Abraham. Some Gnostic groups saw Jesus as sent by the supreme being, to bring gnosis to the Earth. But because they view the material world as lesser or evil, it would have been impossible for Jesus to come in the flesh. Instead they taught that Jesus came via vision.)*
 - The broader principle is that we test the source of a spirit by whether it affirms the Biblical facts about Jesus, not some distorted, heretical view.
5. Is it our responsibility to ever “call-out” false prophets or teachers?
 - What would be some examples of right and wrong ways to do this?
6. Why do we as Christians not need to be afraid of the antichrist or any other demonic spiritual force?
 - For the born again Christian, we have Jesus alive on the inside. And He is greater and more powerful than any demonic power (v. 4).

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1 JOHN

Week of November 11, 2018

God Is Love

1 John 4:7-21

1. **Read 1 John 4:7-21**
2. How is the world's definition of love similar or different from what John is describing here?
 - God's love is sacrificial (v. 10). The world's love is self serving.
 - God's love is unconditional. The world's love is conditional.
 - God's love is based on His character. The world's love is based on emotion.
 - God's love is expressed through what He's done for us. The world's love looks for what you can do for me.
3. What does John say is the manifestation of love (v. 9-10)?
 - The cross. Sacrifice.
 - If I am unwilling to sacrifice for someone, I do not love them. Sacrifice means laying aside my own will, wants, desires, needs, feelings, good, and even dreams. We don't lay aside those things without purpose or recklessly. We do it for their good and that they may flourish.
4. Why does love cast out fear? Why are fear and love incompatible?
5. According to verse 11, what should be the driving motivation behind our love for others?
6. What does it mean that God's love is perfected in us?
7. Why does God command us to love one another?
8. How might we "see" God here on earth if no one has seen God at any time?
 - When we as God's people, Jesus' church, show love for each other, we make the invisible God visible. We reveal God when we love one another.

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1 JOHN

Week of November 18, 2018

Overcoming The World

1 John 5:1-5

1. Read 1 John 5:1-5

2. According to verse 1, How can you know that you are born of God (born again)?
 - If you believe that Jesus is the Christ (messiah, savior), you are saved.
3. Is it possible to be a Christian and waver on this issue?
 - While there may be times where we do not fully understand everything involved with Jesus being the Christ (messiah), it is impossible to deny this fact and be a Christian.
4. What does it mean to you to be “born of God?” What do we do to show we have been born of God?
 - We show it by loving others.
5. Consider the 10 commandments, do you naturally assign less, equal, or greater importance to the commandment to love others? Why or why not?
6. What is important about the connection between loving God and obeying His commands? What would we lose if we tried to separate those two things.
7. Do you find joy in obeying God’s commandments? Has keeping them honestly ever felt burdensome? What can cause us to think this way about God’s good commandments?
8. What are reasons we shouldn’t find God’s commandments to be burdensome?
 - The power of the Holy Spirit inside us gives us the strength to carry them out.
 - God’s commandments protect us from harm, destruction, and death.
 - We are always happiest when we live according to the will of God. We are His creation and design. He knows the best for us. We obey Him out of faith.
9. What does it mean to overcome the world?

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1 JOHN

Week of November 25, 2018

God's Testimony

1 John 5:6-12

1. Read 1 John 5:6-12

2. What is the testimony that John is writing about in this section?
 - That Jesus is the Son of God and that in Him we have eternal life. (v. 11)
3. What are the witnesses we have that Jesus is the Son of God? What is the importance of each for you to believe God's testimony?
 - **Spirit** - Spirit of Truth, Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit within us.
 - **Water** - This is a reference to Jesus' baptism, which is found in all four gospels. At his baptism God the Father testified that Jesus was His son.
 - **Blood** - This is a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. At His crucifixion God the Father testified through the sky turning dark from noon-3 PM, the curtain of the temple being torn from top to bottom, and an earthquake.
4. What does John say we are calling God if we don't believe the testimony He has provided about His son Jesus? (v. 10)
 - To not believe God's testimony about His son is to call God a liar.
5. Are one of the three witnesses easier for you to believe than the other?
6. What are some reasons people still reject the cross of Christ today despite the evidence of the Spirit, water, and blood?
7. Why is it so important for us to know we have eternal life in Jesus?
8. What is the significance of the final verse in this section? Are you as confident as John? Why or why not?

1 John 5:12 - *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

COMMUNITY GROUP: WEEKLY LEADER'S REPORT

Please submit this report online at www.destinychurchsa.com/cgreport

Leader's Name _____ Meeting Date _____

Who Attended your Community Group this week?

How many children were in attendance? _____ Total Attendance: _____

Was anyone in attendance for the first time? _____

List any prayer needs:

Share some good news. What is Jesus doing in your group?

Off Topic Discussion:

Additional comments or concerns:

LOVE

ONE ANOTHER

1 JOHN

Week of December 2, 2018

Eternity Secure

1 John 5:13-21

1. **Read 1 John 5:13-21**
2. Why did John write the book of 1 John?
3. Does every Christian know for certain whether he or she has eternal life? Why do you believe we can be confident that we have eternal life?
4. What should we do if we find ourselves doubting in our hearts about eternal life?
5. God hears us if we pray according to His will (v. 14). How can we know the will of God?
6. What is the difference between sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death? What are examples of this?
 - We need to understand that while all sin is equally detestable in God's eyes, not all sin bears with it the same consequences in this life. There are some sins that are more destructive than others.
7. What does it mean that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (v. 19)? How does this affect the way you view and act towards others?
8. What has meant the most to you personally in this study of 1 John? What's your big takeaway?

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