

**SMALL GROUP
STUDIES**

HERE IS

JOY



Contents:

3	How to use this book
4	Setting the scene for our HERE IS JOY series
5	Overview of studies
6	Study 1: 1 John 1:1-4
9	Study 2: 1 John 1:5-2:2
12	Study 3: 1 John 2:3-11
15	Study 4: 1 John 2:12-17
18	Study 5: 1 John 2:18-27
21	Study 6: 1 John 2:28-3:10
24	Study 7: 1 John 3:11-24
27	Study 8: 1 John 4
30	Study 9: 1 John 5
33	Sermon notes

How to use this book

At St Paul's we are committed to growing as disciples of Jesus, spurring each other on to know and grow in Jesus. We know that God works through His Word powerfully to teach and transform us. We therefore know the importance of seeing God's Word regularly sown into our lives, through our sermon series and also during the week.

We see this process as we daily open God's Word and depend on Him in prayer. We also grow as we meet in our households and study groups to read God's Word together.

Over time we've seen that as we study the same passage from God's Word, that God builds depth in our understanding, stronger application in our lives, and encouragement in our households and church as we learn together.

As we together dig into the idea of **HERE IS JOY** this term, we are exploring the concepts in these ways...

CHURCH

Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church, or keep it handy when you watch church online. Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided. Then, be ready to reflect on these personally, as you meet with someone 121, and as you meet up with your Small Group.

SMALL GROUPS

Take this guide with you to your Small Group each week. There are Bible studies for each topic within the **HERE IS JOY** series, with space to write down your answers plus prayer points that arise from the study and prayer requests from the members of your group.

Setting the scene for our series **HERE IS JOY**

PURPOSE

This letter, written by the Apostle John, is a challenging piece of writing and an important gift to the family of God, those who are in Christ. From 1 John 2:18-23 and 1 John 4:1-3 we learn about a group of people who have left the church and are denying Jesus as the Christ and even as the Son of God. In 1 John 3:4-10 they are causing hostility and division by leading people astray (1 John 3:7).

Given this problem, the elder (John) wants to protect those who hold to the truth about Jesus, by reminding them of what they were taught and the kind of lives this should produce in them.

In recent times cultural and social change that is contrary to Jesus' commands have seeped into the worldwide church. Perhaps we are becoming more and more syncretistic. We take what we like about Jesus and combine it with what the culture is telling us and call it good. There is sometimes too little difference between followers of Jesus and those who do not follow him. These ideas often come from people who were once part of Jesus' church and continue to have influence.

Being reminded of our roots and foundational truths ought to build us up and help us to persevere. This is the purpose of John's letter. This can also be seen in John's writing called Revelation, where we see the refrain: "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus." (Revelation 14:12, 13:10b).

Perseverance means keeping going, even through challenges and difficulties. 1 John is not only about perseverance but assurance (the reason believers persevere).

*"Assurance, then, is a pervading theme in the letter, and grounds of assurance that the author provides tend to be objective and ethical rather than subjective and doctrinaire. The reader's assurance is to be grounded on God's testimony about his Son, their own godly living, loving action and concern for fellow believers, their obedience to the love command, and the Spirit's testimony to Christ."*¹

¹Kruse, Colin G. The Letters of John. (Pillar series) 2000. Page 33.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The structure of 1 John is not easy to pin down. It is not a straightforward or linear argument as we may be used to. It is also not helpful for us to impose this kind of structure on the book to “make it fit.”

1 John is most likely what we would call Epideictic Rhetoric. It is speech, or writing, that relates to values and attitudes and aims to bring a deepening reaffirmation of values already held. It doesn't seek to prove but reaffirm what is already known. A feature of Epideictic Rhetoric is “amplification”, or building on what has already been presented.

The elder reminds the readers of what they already know (1 John 2:3, 2:7, 2:18, 2:21, 2:24, 2:27, 3:5, 3:11). John often uses the expression “we know”, speaking of himself and the apostles, but draws in the readers as believers who have been taught these things and know them as well.

A suggested structure is:

Introduction: 1 John 1:1-4

God is light: 1 John 1:5-3:10

God is love: 1 John 3:11-5:17

Conclusion: 1 John 5:18-21

It is also worth noting that this book is less like a letter and more like a sermon. This helps to read it more as it was intended.

The break up for our teaching series will be as follows:

30th January 2022	1 John 1:1 – 4
6th February 2022	1 John 1:5 – 2:2
13th February 2022	1 John 2:3 – 11
20th February 2022	1 John 2:12 – 17
27th February 2022	1 John 2:18 – 27
6th March 2022	1 John 2:28 – 3:10
13th March 2022	1 John 3:11 – 24
20th March 2022	1 John 4:1 – 6
27th March 2022	1 John 4:7 – 21
3rd April 2022	1 John 5:1-13
10th April 2022	1 John 5:14 – 21

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Campbell C - 1, 2, 3 John.
The Story of God Bible
Commentary. 2017.

The Bible Project Video
Overview: 1-3 John
CLICK [HERE](#) TO WATCH

Study 1

1 JOHN 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION

In the first 4 verses of this book the author is reminding the church of the credibility of the message to which the readers first responded. We all want to have confidence in the information we are given. Why should we believe what we are being told?

In this book the readers are being reminded, in typical John style, that what they believed at first is important, so that when he talks to them regarding those who have left the fellowship teaching a different or nuanced message would be recognisable and should be avoided. In this book the church is being reminded, in typical John style, that what they believed at first is important and trustworthy. Then, when John talks about people who have left the fellowship, teaching a different or corrupted message, the church will be able to recognise this and avoid problems of wrong belief.

QUESTIONS

1. Read all of 1 John. Share any observations made with the group.

2. In 1 John 1:1 we read “that which was from the beginning.” Similar introductory words are found in his gospel (John 1:1). To what is John referring in 1 John 1:1? How is this different from John 1:1?

3. John says that “we” have heard, seen, looked at and touched. Why is it important that John uses “we” as he starts out? What do we learn about the Word of life from this description of what they had understood and taught?

4. What do you think it means that eternal life “was with the father” and appeared to them (verse 2)?

5. In verse 3 what does it mean to have fellowship with each other? How does this relate to fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ?

6. What does it mean to have fellowship with God and therefore other believers? How does this make the joy of John and the other Apostles complete?

MAKING IT STICK

What do you find most difficult about following Jesus?

In what ways do we have fellowship with others? What brings you the most joy in fellowship with Jesus?

How can we help the fellowship of believers to produce more joy?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- John Gray. Pray that he will heal as he takes time over the next few months to recuperate and rest.
- Our wardens, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- Rod and Abby Bishop, in their roles at ECM (European Christian Mission)
- Our church family, that we will grow in our love and knowledge of Jesus.

Study 2

1 JOHN 1:5-2:2

INTRODUCTION

In these verses John lays out the message he has received from the Word of Life (verse 5) and then continues with three conditions which display his understanding of what the false teachers are saying. Included with this is his counter argument to their claim.

As Kruse points out, “In setting out the nature of the claims (and his counter hypotheses), the author not only addresses the false teaching of his opponents, but also reveals what he means by saying that ‘God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.’”²

The language John uses is economical. He tells it how it is and how it ought to be. There is almost an urgency to correct things and to encourage and build up before any rot sets in. The author is telling them things they have heard before which means he can be succinct with his words and get to the point. He does not hold back, however, in showing his loving, pastoral heart for these people, in calling them his “dear children”.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 1:5. What do we learn about the light from the following verses?

Bible verse/s	What do we learn?	How does this relate to the gospel message?
Exodus 13:21-22		
Psalms 27:1		
Psalms 199:105		

²Kruse, Colin G. The Letters of John. (Pillar series) 2000. Page 62

Bible verse/s	What do we learn?	How does this relate to the gospel message?
Isaiah 49:6		
Isaiah 60:19-22		
Revelation 21:23-24		
John 1:4-5		
John 8:12		

2. Read 1 John 1:6-7. What is the false teaching? What is John's counter argument?

3. Read 1 John 1:8-9. What is the false teaching? What is John's counter argument?

4. Read 1 John 1:10-2:2. What is the false teaching? What is John's counter argument?

5. What does it mean that Jesus is an "advocate with the Father"? What does it mean that he is an "atoning sacrifice"?

MAKING IT STICK

Do you find it hard to think of things to confess? Are there times when you trivialise confession? Read Psalm 139:23-24. Is this something you are able to pray?

What does repentance look like in practical terms?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Emma Sibley and hopefully our new Youth Minister as they lead our youth ministries. Ask for wisdom, and for God to sustain them. Pray that the leaders in youth ministry will show God's love to those in their care and that many will be won for the kingdom.
- Our parish council, that God will grant them wisdom as they steward our finances and property.
- John and Fiona McIvor. Pray that God will use them in SE Asia in their new role. Pray God will sustain them and be with Zeke and Clay.
- That we live in a way that reflects a life of honest confession, that we will not remain in old patterns of sin, but when we repent we will grow to be more like Jesus and leave behind the things that kept us from the light.

Study 3

1 JOHN 2:3-11

INTRODUCTION

Obedience is something with which we can struggle. Our self-righteous desire for autonomy drives the conflict within us as it battles with our desire to obey Jesus and live as he did (1 John 2:6).

John wants the readers to be reminded that knowing God means keeping his commands. It is the best way to live and brings God glory at the same time.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 2:3. What do you think John means when he says that we have come to know him?

2. Read 1 John 2:3-11. What is John referring to when he says to keep his commands?

**3. When do you find it hard to love other disciples of Jesus?
Why can it be so hard?**

4. What does it mean to be “in Him” (verses 5-6)?

5. John refers to those who claim that they are in the light (verses 9-11). What is the evidence they are actually in the darkness?

6. How has the darkness blinded those who have left these churches?

MAKING IT STICK

How can we love our brothers and sisters better?

What can you do this week to show love for a brother or sister?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- For Linda Stephens and Naomi Pigot as they lead our children's ministries.
- Keith Baker as he oversees the ministries at St Paul's in John's absence.
- Norm and Janelle Gorrie serving with CMS in Kenya as they strengthen believers and reach the lost.

Study 4

1 JOHN 2:12-17

INTRODUCTION

This section of the letter carries words of encouragement for the believers. John shows his affection for those to whom he is writing. His desire is to encourage them to stay the course, to stay with what they have been taught from the beginning.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 2:12-14. What do you observe in these verses?

2. Read 1 John 2:15-17. What do you think John means by 'the world'? Why is it that you cannot love the world and also love the Father?

3. Read 1 John 2:16. Do you see any similarities and differences between this verse and 1 John 1:1?

4. In verse 17 what does it mean that the world and its desires will pass away?

5. What does it mean to do the will of God?

MAKING IT STICK

What things do we desire most and what lengths do we go to satisfy them?

What can we do this week to focus our attention on God...and do his will?

How can we encourage others to remain faithful to Jesus?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Sunday Care Teams at each of our services, prayer ministry, practical care, Help at Home Days, and the many teams providing care and support to people across our church.
- The Reverend Ruth Waldron, Anglican Dean of Nungalinya College, who is serving with BCA in the Northern Territory. Pray God will keep Ruth well and enthusiastic as she teaches those who come to college.

Study 5

1 JOHN 2:18-27

INTRODUCTION

This section of the book is summarised in 1 John 2:26, “I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.”

In the first part of this section John contrasts two groups: those who are defined as the antichrists (2:18-19) and those anointed by the Holy One (2:20). He is reminding them of who to watch out for and the importance that the believers remain in Christ. Without Jesus what they do and there is no future. He does not want them to be robbed of the hope they have. This hope means they are motivated to love as he describes earlier in his letter.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 2:18-19. What is the last hour?

2. Who are the antichrists?

3. In what ways do antichrists deceive today, that is, deny Jesus is the Christ?

4. What distinguishes the anointed ones from the antichrists?

5. What is promised to those who hold on to the truth? What does this mean to you?

6. Read 1 John 2:26-27. What is the anointing they received?

MAKING IT STICK

What are some of the current messages we hear that can deceive? Where do we hear such messages?

How can we avoid being deterred from the truth? How can we remain faithful to Jesus our Lord?

How can we protect each other from going astray and help each other to remain in Jesus?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Discipleship ministry at church and Paul Lucas as he leads the Discipleship Team.
- Small Group leaders across the church, for their encouragement and growth and the raising up of new leaders.
- Those involved with Read with Me (one-to-one bible reading) with others. Pray for the growth of this ministry for sharing the gospel and growth as disciples.

Study 6

1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

INTRODUCTION

This passage is reminding us of two important truths about who believers are. The first is that we are children of God. The second is about the proof of this first truth by living and acting in line with what being children of God means.

As we have seen, John is reminding those to whom he is writing of what God has done for them and the beauty and privilege of belonging to Him. We are to live rightly as the change in us is significant: it reorients us to God's way. We not only benefit by having our sins forgiven but we continue to live as the children of God.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 2:28-29. How does continuing in him make us confident and unashamed? What does it mean to be born of God?

2. Read 1 John 3:1-3. How would you describe God lavishing love on us?

3. What do you think it means that 'what we will be has not yet been made known'?

4. Read 1 John 3:4-6. As children of God is it possible to live without sinning? What do you think John means by verse 6?

5. Read 1 John 7-10. What ideas or thoughts or actions come to us that make us doubt that in Jesus we are righteous? How is this the devil's work?

MAKING IT STICK

In verse 3 we are told to purify ourselves. How do we do this?

What strategies can we use to avoid being led astray?

Is there someone among your Christian brothers and sisters with whom you need to reconcile?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pat Jones and the young adult ministry.
- Brendan and Karina Pont, that they will be sustained as they serve their community and that God will keep them safe and healthy.

Give thanks to God:

- For his being generous to us and for the generosity of his people in their giving, so that ministries in our church can continue.
- That in Christ we are children of God and that his Spirit is working in us to make us more like Jesus.

Study 7

1 JOHN 3:11-24

INTRODUCTION

Last week we remembered who we are in Christ. What considered what it means to be the children of God. In this passage we are reminded that this is why we love one another. We belong to him and to each other.

Love here is expressed practical terms as well as spiritually. We are to speak the truth, to build each other up in truth. We learn here that love means life. Verse 23 sets out for us Jesus' command. When we believe in him we ought to love each other, so that we clearly bear the family resemblance.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 3:11-24. The command that John wants them to remember (which they heard from the beginning) is to love one another. Why do you think John is particularly talking to those who are believers here?

2. What do you think it means to love one another? When do you find this difficult?

3. In verse 18 we are encouraged in how to love. Do you think John is saying action is the only way they love from this verse?

4. How would you describe the difference between love and hate?

5. In verses 19-22, why does not being condemned give us this confidence to approach God in prayer?

6. Read verses 23-24. Why do you think we find it hard to obey?

MAKING IT STICK

What can we do to keep our confidence in God?

What things shake our assurance? What can we do to maintain our assurance?

How can you support each other as you grow?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Our interns Holly Turner, Chelsea Rumbel, Blake Scurr and Alex Furner. Pray that they will enjoy their time, that they will grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus and that they will make good decisions about ministry in the future.
- Matt and Paula Crowe in Colombia.
- Our church family, that we will love one another with our words and our actions.

Study 8

1 JOHN 4

INTRODUCTION

John is giving us, in these verses, a means to “test ‘spirits’”. In verse 24 of chapter 3 we read that “We know it by the Spirit he gives us”. This is qualified at the beginning of Chapter 4 by explaining how we recognise the Spirit of God. This is spelled out in verses 2-3.

He also reminds them not to be overwhelmed by the world, because the one who is in us is greater than the one in the world.

Chapter 4:7-21 is a complex passage, but enhances the themes already introduced, particularly to love one another and the reasons for it. Coupled with this, John explores the concept of the fruit that we see from this command to love.

QUESTIONS

1. John 4:1-6. How are we able to discern whether spirits are from God? What situation is this particularly speaking to?

2. In verse 5 what do you think is the “viewpoint of the world”?

3. In verse 12 we read that God's love is made complete in us. What do you think this means and how can we tell it is complete?

4. To what is John referring to when he says that perfect love drives out fear?

5. John again talks about the importance of loving each other. How do we do this and not get worn out?

MAKING IT STICK

How do we maintain our zeal for loving and serving others?

How should we respond when others express their love through kindness or generosity toward us?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our small group leaders, that God will sustain them, give them insight and endurance.
- Pray for Rich Vassallo and his production team (both paid and volunteer). Thank God for their gifts and making it possible to meet online.
- Pray that we will be able to love others as we have been loved and to gain a greater understanding of the grace and love God has shown us in Jesus.
- Pray that as we relate to each other we will do so with genuine humility and love. That we will do this for the sake of Jesus name and the good of our brothers and sisters.

Study 9

1 JOHN 5

INTRODUCTION

In these final verses John is again wanting the church to be assured of their hope in Jesus. Their eternal life rests with him and they can be confident of this.

QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 John 5. How would you summarise this chapter in one sentence?
2. What do we learn about Jesus from verses 6-9?
3. In 1 John 5:13-16 what gives the churches John is writing to the assurance of eternal life?

4. In verses 16-17 what are the believers encouraged to pray for as they approach God with confidence?

5. What do you think is the sin that leads to death?

6. Why do you think John ends with the command to keep themselves from idols (which seems to come from out of the blue)?

MAKING IT STICK

How can we keep ourselves from idols?

How can we be praying for each other?

PRAYER

In addition to responding to today's passage and praying for your group members, please be praying for:

- Pray for our D-Team leaders as they lead the youth of our church each week
- Pray for Mark Pozorski and our administration team. Thank God for them and ask him to sustain them in their work as they give admin support for the ministries of St Paul's.
- Pray that we will have the courage to obey and make disciples.
- Pray for our governments, that they will govern for the good of all people.

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 1:1-4

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 1:5-2:2

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 2:3-11

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 2:12-17

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 2:18-27

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

Sermon notes
1 JOHN 3:11-24

Sermon notes

1 JOHN 4

Sermon notes

1 JOHN 5



ST PAUL'S
CASTLE HILL