

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 7TH, 2025 // FIRST JOHN

INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF EPHEBUS

1 John is a letter that was sent to the church in Ephesus, the capital city in Asia Minor, **30–60 years after the resurrection of Jesus.**

- Ephesus had an estimated population of 300,000 and was a trade center for the Roman Empire. The city was **very beautiful** and **sophisticated**, but also **very pagan**. At the center of worship was the pagan goddess Diana.

THE AUTHOR

This letter was written by the apostle John, one of the original 12 disciples of Christ, known as **“the Beloved”** (John 21:20, 24).

- John **penned five books in the NT.** He was originally a disciple of John the Baptist and was the only disciple of Jesus present at His crucifixion. He and his brother James were nicknamed the **“Sons of Thunder.”**

THE THEMES OF THE LETTER

John was writing to encourage Believers to **remain strong in their faith.**

- John will encourage readers to **focus on the love God has for us** and to understand that **our love for others is proof of our love for God.**
- John will use **imagery of light and darkness** to distinguish what is good and true from what is bad and false.
- John's letter will emphasize **the importance of Believers obeying God's commands.**
- John was trying to **combat false teachers** who were rising up and spreading heresy. There was false teaching that it was impossible for God to take on flesh since flesh was evil (Gnosticism) or that Jesus only appeared to take on flesh and was some sort of phantasmal being (Docetism).

REAL RELATIONSHIPS (1 JOHN 1:1–4)

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

To combat false teaching that Jesus was never a physical man, John starts his letter by writing about what he had **“seen with [his] eyes”** and **“touched with [his] hands, concerning the word of life.”**

- John is reestablishing the deity and humanity of Christ, saying that **the eternal God, the One from the beginning, became flesh and dwelt among them** (John 1:1–14).

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

John's purpose in declaring the identity of Christ is to bring readers into fellowship with God and His people. The Greek word for fellowship (*koinonia*) speaks of **sharing, communion, and holding all things in common** (Acts 2:44).

- True fellowship means we **strengthen our faith together, we hold each other accountable, and we restore those who fall away.**

A GENUINE RELATIONSHIP

Our relationships with God and others are **hindered by unconfessed sin.**

- We will never experience the fullness of Christian fellowship if we have unrepentant, hidden sin in our lives. Instead of hiding parts of our lives, **we must bring them into the light, restoring our relationship with God and allowing open and honest fellowship with others.**

“...SO THAT OUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE.”

John's motivation for writing this letter was **“joy,”** knowing that **fellowship with God brings “complete” joy to those who enter into it.**

- Christian **joy is not found in the things of this world**, no matter how good they may be. We must realize **how great a loss it is when we allow our joy to be taken away** by external circumstances, emotions, or sin.

A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP (1 JOHN 1:5–10)

“...THE MESSAGE WE HAVE HEARD FROM HIM...”

John often used imagery in his writings—especially using darkness to represent sin and evil, and light to represent goodness and holiness.

- Since God is light and there is no darkness in Him, **we cannot claim to follow Christ while living in “darkness.” We lie if we claim to follow Christ while living in habitual sin.**

“...THE BLOOD OF JESUS HIS SON CLEANSSES US...”

We are called to walk in the same light (righteousness) that God possesses. We are to be moving far from sin, and we know that **Jesus will reconcile those who stumble**, if they come back for forgiveness and help.

- God is gracious and quick to forgive, but that **does not excuse sin or give us a pass to live against God's commands.**

KNOWING WHAT SIN IS

When we say, **“we have no sin,”** we are **“deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** This is displayed in our actions or lack thereof. An unwillingness to repent gives the impression that there is nothing to repent of.

- We must **know what the Bible calls sin and be ready to confess it**, allowing God to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

“IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS...”

“If we confess our sins” is more than a verbal admission or saying “sorry”—it is **to be in agreement with God when it comes to sin.**

- The word *confess* means **“to say the same thing.”** Confession is agreeing with God that our actions are sinful and harm our relationship with Him. **We must place God's opinion of our conduct above our opinions and preferences.**

RESTORING OUR RELATIONSHIP (1 JOHN 2:1–2)

“MY LITTLE CHILDREN...”

John chose to close out this topic with a fond familial affection, telling his readers that he was only saying these things in hopes that they would walk in the light.

- There is a delicate balance between **walking in the freedom of being forgiven and being free to continue in sin**, but when we get it wrong, **“we have an advocate.”**

OUR ADVOCATE—JESUS CHRIST

As a defense attorney would plead a case before a judge on someone's behalf, Jesus speaks with authority before the Father on our behalf.

- Jesus' defense is not based on our merit or goodness, but on **the completed work of the cross.** Jesus, our advocate, has paid whatever price the judge could impose.

HE HIMSELF IS THE ATONING SACRIFICE

Jesus paid the price for our sins with His life, and **His sacrifice was sufficient for our sins and the sins of the world.**

- This is not teaching a universalist (ultimate reconciliation of all people) approach to salvation, as the Bible makes it clear that **not everyone will be saved** (Matthew 7:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 5:21) but **only those who want to be saved** (Revelation 22:17).

INVITED INTO A RELATIONSHIP

- The idea of being invited into an intimate relationship with God would have been astounding news to John's readers.
- Is this invitation as appealing to us?
- If an invitation to enter into a personal relationship with God is unappealing to us, it may be that we do not truly know who God is (Psalm 8:4).

EVALUATING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

- Are we in Christian fellowship? People often come to experience a relationship with God through relationships with His people.
- Are our relationships only with people who look and think like us?
- We are to be **insulated and not isolated.** We are to be **in the world and not of the world.**

CONFESSION

- Do we say the same thing about sin that God does?
- Do we find ourselves saying, **“I think”** or **“I believe”** more than we say, **“The Bible says”**?
- **It is true confession of what the Bible calls sin that mends our relationship with God, allowing us to walk in the light.**