

All We Need Is

LOVE



A series in 1 John  
April 23–July 16

**Study Guide**

⊕ FIRST FREE CHURCH



# ALL WE NEED IS LOVE: A SERIES IN 1 JOHN

## Message Study Guide

### April 23–July 16

#### BEFORE WE BEGIN

As we go through the book of 1 John together as a church on Sunday mornings, this resource is meant to further your study of the book, whether on your own or with a group. It should line up closely with the text that is covered in that week's sermon; however, there's always a chance that a sermon text or theme gets changed at the last minute. In this case, this study guide may contain questions that are not directly tied to the sermon, but it will continue to be a resource to you as you study 1 John. We also hope it is helpful for those who serve on Sunday mornings and don't always hear the sermon, so that we'll all feel united together under the same Bible passages, though not necessarily the exact same content.

We have included LOTS of questions. We do not expect you to answer every question, every week. If you are in a group setting, choose the questions that will elicit good discussion.

#### BACKGROUND ON 1 JOHN

If you have access to a Study Bible, most will include background info that helps the reader keep what they are reading in context. This will help us understand why John might write some things that we find confusing. Before working through the questions in this guide, spend some time researching the background on why John was writing this letter.

- What might be the ideas that John is trying to counteract with his writing?
- What encouragement is he trying to relay to the followers of Jesus of that time?
- What similarities and differences do we see in our context today?

When you read, it can be helpful to read multiple translations to get a feel for how different translators interpreted words/phrases/ideas. Be on the lookout for repeated patterns of speech or thought patterns. John didn't necessarily follow a clearly discernible outline for this letter, often moving from one idea to the next with each new paragraph, yet he does strategically use patterns to emphasize his main points.

Three themes that seem to be emphasized are **God is Light:** 1:1-2:29, **God is Love:** 3:1-4:21, and **God is Life:** 5:1-21. Keep note of any repeated phrases and ideas as you go.

Finally, this guide can be used for your own personal study or with a group. Don't feel constrained to fit into either category, please do what feels most meaningful to you as you study the Word. However, always keep in mind that the Bible is meant to address the family of God as a community. We cannot exist in a family in isolation, so our hope is that you are able to connect with others in some way as you read and study God's Word.



## **MESSAGE NOTES**

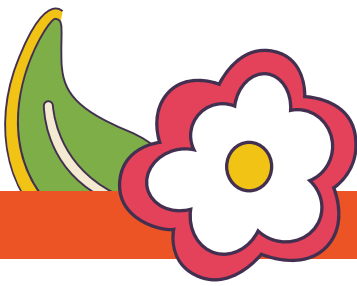
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## **SERMON WRAP-UP QUESTIONS**

*Immediately following the sermon, answer these questions:*

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What are several practical steps you could take to grow spiritually based on what you heard from the sermon?



# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 1 | 1 JOHN 4:7-10

- As we read and interact with messages in 1 John, we will be pointing out words, phrases, themes and ideas that John is repeating from the Gospel of John. One of the most well-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16. Read John 3:16-17. Compare it to 1 John 4:9-10. What similar idea do you see?
- What does the phrase, "God is love" mean?
- How did God manifest (make obvious) His love for us? How would you define this kind of love? What kind of standard does that set for how we love others?
- John seemed to be addressing ideas or teachings that had caused some to fall away from the belief in Jesus as the true Son of God, so he often points out to his readers how to know if someone is still walking in the way of Jesus. How does John make this point in verses 12-17?
- Abiding/remaining is an important theme in 1 John as well, likely because there were some who were not remaining. What should be true of those who "remain" or "abide" according to John?
- Read John 15:1-17. What similarities do you see between these two passages? Are the exhortations the same?
- Why is the emphasis on loving others so important?
- How is this command to love as God loved us still important for us today?
- If true love comes from God and is exemplified by him, how should we go about seeking to grow in love for the people in our lives?
- Is the Holy Spirit prompting you in any specific ways?

**PRAY** that we would be a church known for its love for God and love for others because He has loved us.



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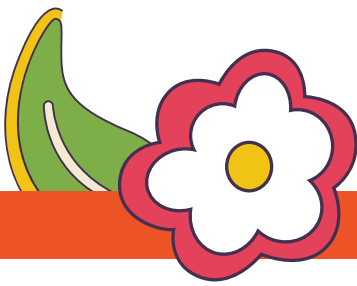
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 2 | 1 JOHN 1:1-4

- What echoes of Genesis 1 and John 1 do you see/hear in this section?
- What or who is the Word of Life? (Read John chapter 1:1-5)
- How was the life of Jesus revealed? (Thumb through the Gospel of John. What are some key characteristics of Jesus' life?)
- John writes about the physical/tangible nature of Jesus' life and body in vs. 1-3. Why might that be important for these believers after Jesus is no longer physically with them? Why is it important for us?
- "So that" is a common phrase that John used in his Gospel, and we will see it often in this letter as well. What are the reasons that John gives following both of the "so that" phrases in this section? What was the desired result of embracing the message John was writing? Have you personally believed this message?
- V. 3 mentions "fellowship with us" and our "fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus." What does fellowship mean?

**CONTEXT** Here's what the Greek word means: **koinōnia**, n. [19] [√ 3123]. fellowship, the close association between persons, emphasizing what is common between them; by extension: participation, sharing, contribution, gift, the outcome of such close relationships:– fellowship (9), participation (3), common sharing in (1), contribution (1), partnership (1), partnership with (1), share with others (1), sharing (1), sharing in (1) (NIV Exhaustive Concordance Dictionary. Copyright © 2015 by Zondervan.)

- What impact does having this type of fellowship with one another and with the Father and with Jesus have on your life?
- How does the truth about Jesus (knowing who he is and what he accomplished) contribute to the experience of joy in your life?

**PRAY** and ask the Holy Spirit to help us trust the words we're reading, written by someone who walked, talked, and ate with Jesus, and for guidance on how our lives can be changed to reflect God's Kingdom to the world.



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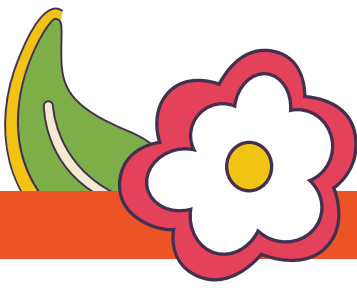
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 3 | 1 JOHN 1:5-10

- What is the message that John has heard and is now declaring?
- Who did he hear it from?
- What does it mean that God is light? (Read John 1:6-13) Why is "light" such a good descriptor for Jesus considering who he is and what he accomplished?
- What significance do the "if we" statements hold? (V. 6-7 go together with a contrasting negative statement followed by a positive, vs. 8, 9, 10 go together in a similar way - vs. 8 and 10 gives us very similar negative statements, and vs. 9 is the positive statement sandwiched in between.)
- What contrasts is he making with these statements?
- Vs. 6: What does it mean to walk in the darkness? Is his statement for those who "walk in darkness" or for those who are saying something else with their lives than they are saying with their words?
- Vs. 7: What does it mean to walk in the light? What hope do we find when we walk in the light?
- Vs. 8, 10: What is the consequence that John points out if our actions don't line up with what we say to be true?
- In what ways might we communicate or believe that we are "without sin"?
- Vs. 9: What is the ultimate hope for all of us?
- Read John 3:16-21 again. What correlation do you see between that passage and this one?
- Are there any areas of your life that don't line up with your confession of faith?
- What are some practical ways that we can "live in the light" as it's described in verse 7? In what ways is the Holy Spirit working in your heart to walk in the light?

**PRAY** that the Holy Spirit would reveal to us where our actions are not lining up with our words. What needs to be brought to the light? Thank him that we know that he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins!



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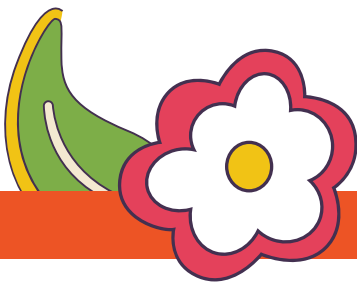
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 4 | 1 JOHN 2:1-6

- In this section another theme is introduced that will remain throughout the rest of the book: abiding. This is another theme present in the Gospel of John (also translated remain.) Read John 15:1-17. How does the illustration of a vine and branches help us define what Jesus meant by abiding? What are the outcomes of abiding that are found in John and 1 John?
- It seems that there may have been some who were teaching false things either about the ideas of sin or who Jesus was that John is working to contrast. John states another reason for writing (another "so that.") What is it?
- What is God's desire for those who call themselves followers of Jesus? What hope/provision is there for those who do sin?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the advocate? (Hebrews 7:25)
- For whom is Jesus the atoning sacrifice?
- In verse 3, what is the rubric we can use for if we know Jesus? What commands was John referring to? (Look ahead to John 3:23. What other passages does this bring to mind?)
- What contrast does John make in verses 4-5?
- How does knowing God live side-by-side with obedience?
- Is the life of Jesus a life that we should look to mirror? If so, what are some simple ways that we live like Jesus did?
- Are there people in your life that encourage you with their obedience to Jesus? Let them know!

**PRAY** that we would remain in Jesus and walk just as he walked.



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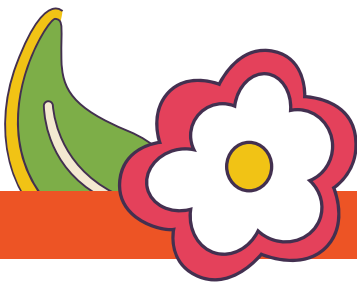
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### 1 John 2:7-11

- How can the command to love God and others be both old and new, at the same time? (See Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37, John 13:34)
- Read John 13:33-35. What parallels do you see between these two passages?
- Who is the true light that John says is already shining? (Look at John 1:5, 9; 8:12.)
- John uses his pattern of contrasting statements in verses 9, 10, and 11. What kind of people is he contrasting?
- Why is it a problem to say that you are in the light (in Jesus) and have fellowship with God and yet hate your brother or sister?

### 1 John 2:12-14

- John seems to add some sort of poetry here but it's unclear why. Here are a few notes from some study resources:

#### CONTEXT

**2:12-14 Poem about Christian community.** It's possible these verses already existed as a Christian poem or song. It stands somewhat independent of the narrative flow. "Dear children" continues the New Testament theme of the church being a family. (NIV First Century Study Bible)

What encouragement does this poem give?

### 1 John 2:15-17

- What does John mean when he uses "world" each time the word is repeated?
- John 3:16 says God loved the world. Does "world" mean something different there than it does here?
- Look ahead to how John ends 1 John (5:21). What clue might this give us as to what he means by "world" in these verses?
- In what areas of your life does love for the world compete with your love for God? (e.g. your use of money? Time? Priorities? Relationships, etc.)
- What hope can we take from verse 17?

**PRAY** that we would be people who remain in Jesus and love Him and others and not chase after idols of the world.



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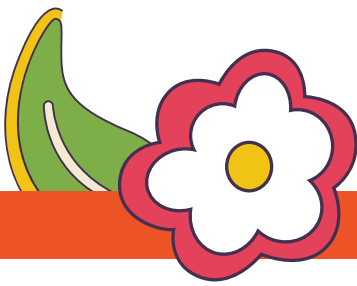
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## WEEK 6 | 1 JOHN 2:18-27

- John references "the last hour" in verse 18. In John's Gospel, he records Jesus referencing the "hour" as well as in John 2:4, John 12:23, and John 17:1-3. What do these passages tell you about what John thought "the last hour" meant?
- How does he say his readers can know it's the "last hour?"
- Typically, Christians think of "the Antichrist" as a specific entity who is involved in end times events. In this passage, John says "so now many antichrists have come." How is he defining antichrist? (Look ahead to vs. 22 and look up the term in a Bible dictionary.) What danger do they pose to the believers?
- Think of all the ways that John has pointed out people's lying so far (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4; 2:15-16). What is a surefire way to know if someone is lying when they are talking about God? How does this relate to the idea of an antichrist?
- Verse 19 refers to some who have left the community that John is writing to. What does their leaving make clear to John?
- He contrasts those who have left with those to whom he is writing. What encouragement does he give them? How are the Christ-followers described? (v. 20, 21, 25)
- What promise is there for those who cling to the truth that they know about Jesus? (Vs. 25)
- What is the instruction to the Christ followers in verses 24-27? Note the repeated word used. What does it mean?
- Why is "abiding" or "remaining" particularly important to his audience? (Go back to vs. 19)
- What encouragement/hope does this give us in our context as we still wait for Jesus' return?

**PRAY** that we would cling to the truth we know about Jesus and that we would not deny Jesus with our lives.



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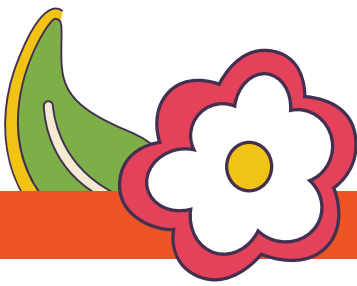
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 7 | 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

- Why might someone be ashamed before God? (What, if any, parallels do you see between 2:28-29 and Genesis 3:8-10) What is John's exhortation and encouragement?
- What two types of people does John contrast in 3:4-10?
- Why does the word "sin" make us uncomfortable? John uses that word over and over, both in this section and throughout the book. Why do you think sin is largely dismissed in our society?
- Does this section expect us to live sin-free lives? How do phrases like *practice of sinning* and *keeps on sinning* help us understand what John is saying?
- Why does John say Jesus was revealed? (v. 8)
- What line of demarcation does John draw between children of the devil and children of God?
- At the end of this passage, what emphasis does he place on the importance of loving others?
- John calls us "little children", "children of God", and "born of God", and addresses God as our "Father." How does this help you understand the concept of abiding and of His love? How should this profoundly motivate you to practice righteous living?
- What thoughts, feelings, and emotions does this passage bring up in your heart? Are there areas of continual sin in your life that deny the words you say when you say you follow Jesus? If your answer to this makes you uncomfortable or full of shame, read 1 John 2:1-2 again. What encouragement or hope does that bring you?

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**PRAY** that we would remain so that when Jesus appears we will have confidence that we have loved God and others because of his great love for us.



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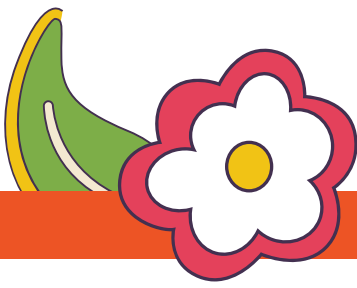
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 8 | 1 JOHN 3:11-24

- What two groups of people is John contrasting in this section?
- How is our love for God's people proven to be genuine?
- I John 3:16 states that Christ's love was so significant that he laid down His life for us. How is that a model for how we should love others?
- Verse 18 seems to be a good summary for a lot of what John has said in this book so far. What does it look like to love in action and in truth and not just word or speech?
- What other passages of scripture does this bring to mind? (James 2:22)
- What connection is made with both truth and love, and how do both of those things work together as we seek to love our neighbors well?
- What are the two commandments given to us in I John 3:23? Is it possible to keep the second of these commandments without keeping the first one?
- What role does obedience to this command play in our abiding or remaining in God?
- How is the Holy Spirit prompting you to love others practically and self sacrificially?

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**PRAY** that we would be people whose actions would align with what we say we believe, and that we would love in action and in truth. Pray for eyes to see opportunities to show compassion to others.



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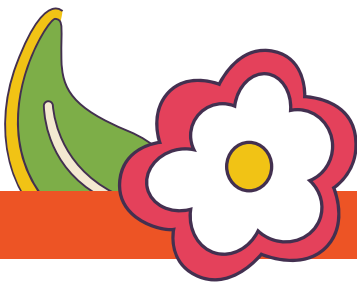
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 9 | 1 JOHN 4:1-6

- What two things is John contrasting in this passage?
- John has been giving his readers a rubric to use to help them determine whether someone was truly a follower of Jesus. So far, he's emphasized a life of obedience to God and love for others as evidence that someone is abiding in God. Now what evidence does he say will help them know if someone is teaching from the Spirit of God and not from a spirit of deception?
- In our day, false teachers often will deny the deity of Jesus, but in John's day, it was common for false teachers to deny the humanity of Jesus. For instance, some said Christ only seemed to have a body (Docetism) but in reality, he was just spirit. This likely was at least one reason that John wrote this book. Why is it important to believe that Jesus was both God and a human?
- We live in a world filled with falsehoods causing many of us to worry about the future. Why is there no need to fear the enemies of Christ and all the falsehood that brings into our world? (v.4)
- Do we still struggle with discerning what might be teaching from the Spirit of Truth vs. the spirit of error or deception? How might we be discerning followers of Jesus today?
- In what avenues do you encounter or are you tempted to listen to the "spirit of deception"? (Hint, what tempts you to choose anger instead of love toward others? What causes you to love anything more than God and others? Where/when/why might you be tempted to believe that self-sacrificial love and righteous living don't matter for someone who says they follow Jesus?)

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**PRAY** that the Holy Spirit would give us discernment as we live in the world, that we'd be wary of any teaching that doesn't call us to love God and love others.



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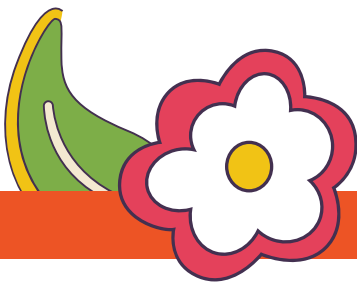
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## WEEK 10 | 1 JOHN 4:11-21

- John states repeatedly that we, the beloved by God, are not only to love God but are to love one another. What is love--an emotion, an action, a commitment, or something else? Review I Corinthians 13:4-7 for more information about this kind of love. How should God's love for us inform our understanding of love?
- Why does John keep coming back to this idea?
- What other themes does John return to yet again in this section?
- What does it mean "as he is, so also are we in this world?" What does that mean for us as followers of Jesus? What should be characteristic of us?
- What does he say is not a part of love?
- Why do those of us who have confessed Jesus as the Son of God need not fear the day of judgment? (v. 17-18)
- What connection do you see between v. 18 and 1 John 1:5? Have you had an experience of God's love casting out fear?
- V. 20 begins another pattern where John returns to someone's words vs. their actions. What hypocrisy is he pointing out?
- What command do we have? (v. 21)
- How well does your love for God translate into loving others? What opportunities do you have to love others?
- Why does the order of who loved whom first matter in verse 19?

**PRAY** that we'd remain in God's love and that we'd be as he was in the world.



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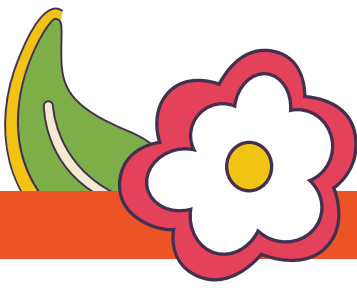
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## WEEK 11 | 1 JOHN 5:1-5

- Much of this section should sound similar by now. Where have you heard John say similar things throughout his letter so far?
- Why was it so important for him to communicate how his readers can know who has been born of God?
- What is the evidence that we have been born of God? Do you personally believe this? Why is this not burdensome?
- What is the difference between something being difficult vs. being a burden?
- What does it mean to "overcome the world"?
- In what ways are we invited into Jesus' victory on the cross?

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**PRAY** that we'd continue to be people who believe that Jesus is the Christ, that we'd love the Father, and love others. Pray that we'd live righteously in the world, righting the wrongs done by sin's deception.



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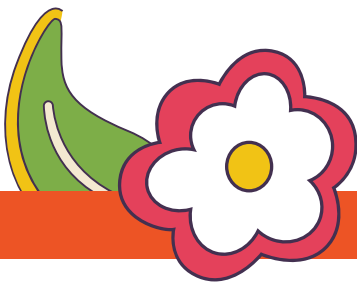
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## WEEK 12 | 1 JOHN 5:6-12

- Ancient documents/decisions needed 2-3 witnesses (for instance, look at Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15.) Here John offers 3 witnesses to Jesus being who he said he was. What 3 witnesses does he offer?
- Read each of the following sections in the Gospel of John to see how God has given witness to Jesus:
  - Water (John 1:29-30)
  - Blood (John 12:23-33)
  - The Spirit (John 14:26 and 15:26)
- How do these 3 testimonies speak to Jesus as the Son of God?
- If potentially false ideas about who Jesus was were causing some to walk away from the community, what is John trying to communicate to those who remained?
- In what ways should the Father's testimony of his Son influence our own beliefs about Jesus and who he is?
- Verses 10-12 give us another contrasting pattern. Who is John contrasting?
- Why is verse 11 so important? What testimony do these three witnesses give?
- In other sections, John emphasizes Love, and Obedience. What idea is emphasized in this section? (Look for repeated words esp. in verses 10-12)
- What role does belief play according to John?
- Based on what we've read so far, can the claim of belief alone be trusted to know if someone is truly following Jesus?

**PRAY**—what does this passage prompt you to pray?



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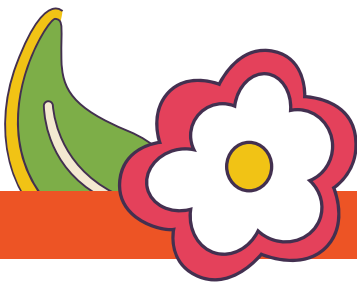
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# PRAYEXPLOREAPPLY

## WEEK 13 | 1 JOHN 5:13-21

- You have now read the entire letter of 1 John!
- What additional reason for writing does he give? What hope does this give you?
- What confidence do we have in prayer (vs. 14-15)? (Also read John 14:12-14)
- How does this confidence in prayer relate to praying for our brothers and sisters who are sinning (v. 16)?
- 1 John 5:16-17 are challenging verses. What is the sin that leads to death? In the context of John's letter, think of all the things John has emphasized. (Loving God, loving others, believing in Jesus as the Son of God, and a life of obedience to God through Jesus) How might Numbers 15:27-31 help us understand this passage?
- Why does John not encourage his readers to pray for those who he says are committing a sin that leads to death?
- How does John summarize the end of his letter in vs. 18-20? What confidence can his readers have that we can also have?
- John ends his letter somewhat abruptly with verse 21. How does the entirety of what John has written so far actually line up with guarding yourselves from idols? What (if any) idols are competing for your love for God and others?
- Now that we have completed reading, studying, and hearing messages about 1 John, spend some time summarizing its major themes and list key verses.
- What have you been encouraged or challenged by?

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**PRAY** How does this whole letter prompt you to pray right now? For yourself? For others? For our church?

# THANK YOU FOR JOINING US FOR THIS STUDY THROUGH 1 JOHN!

**We'd love to hear from you!** If you have any lingering questions about 1 John or if there's something that has been on your heart as you've studied 1 John with us, we'd love to know. Send us an email: [\*\*info@firstfreelincoln.org\*\*](mailto:info@firstfreelincoln.org)