



Daily Bible Habit

The Letters Of John

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Focus Points...*For 1 John 1*

Listen...

- * To John's invitation to you to confess Your sins and receive grace from Jesus Christ, the gloriously resurrected Lord.

Prayer:

Lord of love, help me to hear Your message of love through John, Your beloved disciple. May his endearing invitation to grace remind me of Your daily invitation to come before You, confess my sins and receive Your unmerited grace. In Your name I pray. Amen.

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Commentary:

The three letters of John are also called the Johannine (pronounced "joe-HAN-nine) Epistles. Though no date is specified, John's tender fatherly (almost grandfatherly) tone suggests he wrote it later in his life, perhaps between 60-90 AD.

Compared to many of Paul's letters, the Johannine Epistles were not written to a specific named church or locale such as Rome or Corinth. In contrast to Paul's intellectually detailed (and sometimes confusing) style, John's writings—his Gospel, his letters, and the Book of Revelation—are written in a very simple, easy-to-read style. In his letters Paul was often very forceful and direct as he boldly defended the Gospel. In contrast, John's letters are warm and inviting.

John's disarmingly endearing style of writing can make one feel as if he is their BFF (i.e. Best Friends Forever). Perhaps that is one of John's great hallmarks. His loving, approachable style of writing is a magnet, drawing believers and unbelievers to Jesus.

The *First Epistle of John* was written to his "children." We don't know if John ever married and had children. When he spoke of children it was his tender way of addressing believers. If they were walking in faith, calling them "children" lovingly encouraged them. If Christians were not walking in faith as they should, calling his audience "children" was a call to loving discipline and return to their Lord.

Like many of Paul's writings, John's letters were written against Gnostics. Gnostics were those who claimed special hidden knowledge not revealed in the Bible. They claimed that because God had revealed to them hidden mysteries

that they were “more spiritual” than other Christians. They claimed for themselves authority superior to the apostles. Claiming special status before God, they wreaked havoc on the Churches and the genuine faith of believers.

The other major threat present from the earliest days of the Church, were the Judaizers. These were simply Jewish teachers who insisted that salvation didn't come through Jesus. To be saved, they taught individuals must obey the Sabbath and Old Testament regulations. Denying the benefits of Jesus' death, they also denied the cornerstone of the Christian faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. I Corinthians 15 et al.).

The opening words of John's First Epistle contain one of the Scripture's most definitive affirmations of Jesus' resurrection. John, the only one of the Twelve Disciples to be at the cross of Christ, gave remarkable eye-witness testimony that Jesus was alive. The English rendering of the Greek original can only partially reflect John's confident, definitive, unmistakable testimony: Jesus is risen.

Note that John's First Epistle does not follow the standard form for letters used by Paul. It has no mention of the sender, the addressee, or a blessing. The absence of these items, suggests to some that John's first letter may have been a sermon. But note John's words, “We write this to make your joy complete” (1:4).

How can joy be “made complete”?

“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1:7)

That's the purpose of John's letter: to make believers' joy complete by confessing their sins, receiving forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, and walking in the light of holiness.

It's a simple prescription of joy that has been effective for centuries. It is also effective today. Do you seek joy? Then confess your sin, be purified in the blood, and walk in the Light of God's holiness.

Prayer:

Father, as You sent Jesus to purify me from my sin, let me boldly come before You to receive Your forgiveness. Remove all darkness from me and call me to Your light. In Your name I pray. Amen.

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