



grow. pray. study.

September 21, 2025 *Life, Light, and Love*

Scripture: 1 John 1:1-2, 5, 2:10, 1 John 4:16b

Love Flows From God's Light Within Us

MONDAY 9.22.25 1 John 1:5-7, 1 John 4:7-12

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

1 John shared two key Christian themes: “The apostles’ message about God’s way of salvation is shaped by two core beliefs: ‘God is light’ (1 John 1:5) and ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8).” * Scholar Leon Morris wrote, “For [Jesus] love depends on the nature of the lover rather than that of the beloved. Jesus loved because he was a loving person, not because he found attractive qualities in those he loved. His followers are to be loving people, not simply to be drawn to attractive people.” **

- “That love-filled God-life... is available for all who ‘walk in the light’.... When we consciously turn to the light—when we face up to what’s gone wrong in the past and don’t try to hide it, and when we are determined to live that way from now on... we find that Jesus’ blood somehow makes us clean, pure and fresh inside.... All because of Jesus.” *** How does God’s forgiving, cleansing light brighten your life? What practical difference has Jesus’ love made in your relationships?
- The phrase, “No one has ever seen God” (4:12), set up the next line: “If we love each other, God remains **in us**.” Amazingly, when we’re getting it right, people can see God in us despite our remaining flaws. It’s like the line in Gordon Jensen’s song that says, “You’re the only Jesus some will ever see.” **** As your capacity grows to take in God’s love, to see yourself as lovable in God’s sight, how is this changing the way you see and relate to others?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, let your light shine out through me in such a way that your love changes others for the better just by having seen you in me. Amen.

* Robert W. Wall, Introduction to 1 John in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 476 NT.

** Leon Morris, article “Love” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992, p. 492.

*** Wright, N. T., *Early Christian Letters for Everyone* (The New Testament for Everyone) (pp. 147-148). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

**** [Click here](#) to hear Gordon Jensen sing “You’re the Only Jesus.”

God's "DNA" Changes Our Life Direction

TUESDAY 9.23.25 1 John 3:7-11

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

“Make sure no one deceives you” wasn’t a vague warning. [1 John 2:22-23](#) made it clear that specific teachers who had belonged to the Christian family were now actively chipping away at that group’s central belief in Jesus. That was not a fussy argument about some minor verbal technicality. Believing the false teachers’ led people to believe that sin was no big deal, or even that everything they did was automatically right. Holding fast to trust in Jesus produced lives that “practiced” living in God’s way.

- “They can’t sin” was not about failing at times but the overall way of life. “John knows that Christians do still sin from time to time; there is a remedy for that (see [1 John 2:1](#)). What he is talking about here is life’s whole habit... sinning as the regular mode in which we live. We should be doing our best to avoid all kinds of sin, all the time, though we shall surely fail; but the failures must take place within a settled habit of life in which sin is no longer setting the tone.” * How is God’s loving light altering your habits for good?
- No one in New Testament times had our specific knowledge of human DNA, but this translation captures the writer’s intention. “The Greek term *sperma* can refer to ‘genetic character’ and is used here as a metaphor for the divine nature (cf. [2 Peter 1:3](#); [Genesis 4:1, 25](#)).” ** How is the Holy Spirit’s power moving you in the direction of living “in the same way that Jesus is righteous”?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for your grace that forgives and preserves me when I do sin. And thank you for your powerful Spirit who breaks the power of sin to bind and dominate my life. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., *Early Christian Letters for Everyone* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 163). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

** Robert W. Wall, study note on 1 John 3:9 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 480 NT.

Jesus Defined Love Through Self Sacrifice

WEDNESDAY 9.24.25 1 John 3:13-17

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

In a letter rooted in “love,” “light” and “life,” these verses offer a stark contrast with words like “hates,” “death” and “murderers.” (Other passages also showed the contrast between God’s Kingdom and the world as it is—e.g., [John 15:18-19](#), [Galatians 5:17-23](#).) While these antonyms seem obvious in writing, it can be harder in our day-to-day life to fully recognize and “know love” (verse 16). Scholar N.T. Wright states the best way to distinguish between “life” and “death” is to “listen carefully, and sift and weigh what you hear.” *

- In doing this vital listening, Wright continues, “Sometimes all a Christian can do... is to cling on to the bald and basic statement that, so far as we can tell, the meaning of the word ‘God’ is actually defined in relation to the Jesus who, we believe, came from this God and became flesh in our midst.” ** Which stories about Jesus most clearly reveal His love to you?
- Verse 16 highlighted Jesus’ self-sacrificing demonstration of love and our response to His mighty act by imitating this sacrificial love, even if usually in a more limited way, in our relationships. How can you daily accept this challenge to prioritize the needs of the people around you?

Prayer: Lord, Jesus, thank you for loving me to the point of self-sacrifice and being God’s flesh in my life. Help me stand boldly in love and joyfully serve others even when the world tells me differently. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., *Early Christian Letters for Everyone* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 167). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

** *Ibid.*, p. 169.

God's Grace Quiets Our Condemning Hearts

THURSDAY 9.25.25 1 John 3:18-23

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

Precisely because our commitment to Jesus moves us away from the habitual practice of the negative behaviors known as “sin,” the moments when we fall short of that high ideal may shake our confidence. Do we really belong to Christ after all? Nearly all of us know of times when, as 1 John put it, “our hearts condemn us.” We can give thanks that at those times God has the answer to keep us from despair and utter defeat.

- In *The Message* paraphrase, 1 John 3:18-20 reads, “Let’s practice real love. This is the only way we’ll know we’re living truly, living in God’s reality. It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.” * In what ways can perfectionism spoil your trust? What has helped/is helping you learn to trust God’s grace more than your self-criticism?
- It’s important to honestly acknowledge your failures (cf. [1 John 1:8-10](#)). But severe self-criticism can lead you to the foolish belief that you have higher standards for yourself than God has. “When true believers doubt their relationship with God, God overrides their self-condemnation through the community’s selfless love for each other and obedience to God’s commandments (cf. [James 1:5-8](#); [4:8-12](#); [Romans 8:1](#)).” ** Are you willing to let God’s grace quiet your condemning heart?

Prayer: Lord God, I want so much to live a life that pleases you. Thank you for reminding me, often, that self-condemnation is not your will for me, for overriding my tendencies to self-doubt and even self-hatred. Amen.

* Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message Numbered Edition Hardback*. Navpress. Kindle Edition.

** Robert W. Wall, study note on 1 John 3:19-21 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 480 NT.

God's Perfect Love Drives Out All Fear

FRIDAY 9.26.25 1 John 4:15-21

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

Some people think Christians are rigid, critical, and unloving. Sadly, that view is too often based on knowing people who claim to follow Jesus. But that’s not what 1 John taught! John Wesley, founder of Methodism, preached a sermon that quoted today’s reading and invited all Christ-followers, “Let us provoke all men, not to enmity and contention, but to love and good works; always remembering those deep words... ‘God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him!’” *

- The letter said, “Perfect love drives out fear,” and went on to say, in 4:20, “Those who say, ‘I love God’ and hate their brothers or sisters are liars.” Those thoughts were connected. Do you agree that it is often fear that leads you to hate other people? Why would hating others block any true love for God? Can you think of practical ways to let God’s perfect love move you in the direction of acting in love toward “others,” even if you think they deserve fear and distrust rather than love?
- “‘God is love’.... touches on everything, from the individual-psychological to the radically communal.... Love and God go together; hate and God do not (4:20); fear and God do not (4:18).”
** Have you ever experienced a situation in which, as you learned to love another person, your fear of that person decreased and even disappeared? In what ways has following Christ made you and your relationships more loving?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you embodied God’s love for me. Now you call me to embody your love as I deal with other people, even people I may not like, may even fear. Grow your love in my heart. Amen.

* From Wesley’s April 21, 1777 sermon “On Laying The Foundation Of The New Chapel, Near The City-Road, London” at <http://www.godrules.net/library/wsermons/wsermons132.htm>.

** Jaime Clark-Soles note on 1 John 4:16-20 in *The CEB Women’s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016, p. 1562.

You Can be Sure Eternal Life Begins Now

SATURDAY 9.27.25 1 John 5:1-5, 11-13

As we study 1 John, we encourage all GPS readers to daily read these verses aloud and memorize them: ***“Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love.”*** 1 John 4:7-8 ([Click here](#) to download a printable card version of these verses.)

We often think of “eternal life” as only in the far-off future. But, as in verse 12 today, John 5:24 said Jesus used the present tense: “I assure you that whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me HAS eternal life... HAS passed from death into life.” Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, hit a crucial turning point when he quit “wishing” or “hoping” to be saved. His journal recorded the change: “An assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” * The faith in Jesus that 1 John aimed to reinforce was never an abstract, sterile belief. It was a living, passionate, active trust that Jesus was and is who he said, and therefore his promise was credible. That conviction sustained first-century believers (and can sustain you) in building the kind of life that can defeat all the evil, hatred and negativity in this tired old world.

- If we’re honest, we know that too often we’re defeated spiritually (bad actions or attitudes). What if God sees us as “losers”? But if 1 John 5:4’s clear words on the basis of spiritual victory are true (“this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith”), then the only thing that could block you from being in God’s winning team would be to give up. What helps you, as you grow spiritually and aim to stand for God in the world, to keep your trust in God’s goodness, not your own?
- Our faith looks to the future with hope. But the writings linked to John often put “eternal life” in the present tense (cf. [John 3:36](#), [5:24](#), [6:47](#), [54](#), [10:28](#), and today’s reading). *The Message* paraphrased 1 John 5:13 as “My purpose in writing is simply this: that you who believe in God’s Son will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you have eternal life.” ** Are you confident that God truly accepts you? In what parts of your life are you finding the eternal quality of life now, not “someday”?

Prayer: God, I sometimes hesitate to say I am sure of eternal life—it can feel arrogant. But that’s your promise, so help me live my life confidently, not tentatively, as the first chapter of eternity with you. Amen.

* From John Wesley’s journal at <https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html>.

** Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message Numbered Edition Hardback*. Navpress. Kindle Edition.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer Prayers of peace and comfort for:

To **Greg and Jen Caswell** following the death of **Robert “Bob” Theodore** (Jen’s Father), who died 9/5/2025.

To **Jan Marrs** following the death of **Doris Marrs** (Mother), who died 9/12/2025.

To **Andy Gravitt** following the death of **Angela Gravitt** (Wife), who died 9/14/2025.

To **Jeff Williams** following the death of **Rick Short** (Stepfather), who died 9/15/2025.