

The First Epistle of John

9

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we begin reading John's first epistle. But before we do, let's take a quick look at the author of this letter, his readers and his purpose for writing.

Although the author nowhere identifies himself, there has never been any real question as to the identity of the author. From the earliest records of church history it has been agreed that this letter was written by the apostle John, one of the twelve original disciples of the Lord Jesus. Polycarp, John's own disciple, quotes from **1 John 4:3** in a later epistle of his own. Other second and third century church leaders also frequently quoted from **1 John**.

The similarity in syntax and style between this epistle and the Gospel account of **John** is also remarkable, lending strong support to a common authorship. To get a little feel for the writer's style, read the following passages from the Gospel account by John and note the similarities to sections of the apostle's first letter.

Read John 1:1-18

Read John 20:30-21:25

Unlike most of the letters of the New Testament, this letter is untitled and was probably intended to be read as a circular letter to a number of Gentile churches. It was written toward the end of the first century, probably between A.D. 85 and 90, well after deaths of Peter and Paul, and after the destruction of Jerusalem.

As to the purpose of the letter, John himself describes his intent in **5:13**:

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Further to this, however, John is also writing to address various gnostic heresies that had infested the Church at the end of the first century.

With this in mind, let's pull up a comfortable chair and read through the entire book of **1 John** in one sitting. Enjoy!

Memory Verse

“Whoever claims to live in him
must walk as Jesus did.”

1 John 2:6

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its “address” (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear “reference tag.”
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!