



1 JOHN

LIGHT • LIFE • LOVE

STUDIES 1-5

LEADER'S
NOTES

Introduction to 1 John - Light, Life & Love

John wrote his *gospel* so his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. His *first letter* was written so that those who believe should remain in and be confident in this belief.

He writes, "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." (1 John 5:13).

As his first readers listened and were strengthened, so may we.

In the face of those who deny the God's Christ is Jesus, who deny the reality and gravity of sin, who claim to know him and yet whose words and actions deny him, who claim to have special insight into the things of God we need not doubt that we know him and know life. As God has loved us, so we love him and all with whom we have fellowship.

Term Outline

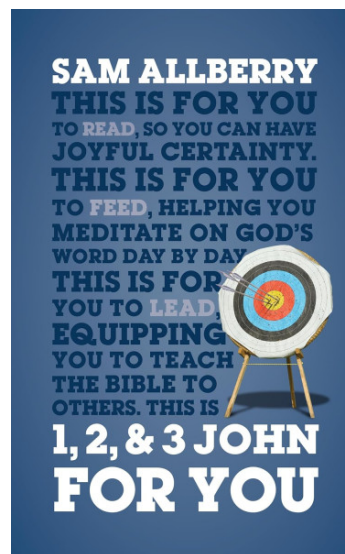
Sunday	Text	Title
20 th July	1:1-4	Light, Life & Love
27 th July	1:5-2:2	Cleansed by the Light
3 rd August	2:3-14	Walk in the Light
10 th August	2:15-27	Do not love the World
17 th August	2:28-3:12	Does what we do Matter?
24 th August	3:13-24	Love one another
<i>25th August Christianity Explored starts</i>		
31 st August	4:1-6	Hear God's Spirit
7 th September	4:7-21	God is Love
14 th September	5:1-12	Born of Love to Love
<i>14th September - GG Leaders meeting on Sunday at 11:50am</i>		
21 st September	5:13-21	Certain Life

Resources

1, 2 & 3 John For You – Sam Allberry

Pastor Sam Allberry unpacks these three short books verse by verse, helping readers to face the letters' challenges and grow stronger in their faith, in the joyful certainty that they will always be God's beloved children.

They are short and simple enough to read through easily but also insightful and challenging in a way that helps you understand and apply the word of God to your life.



How To Read The Bible Better - Richard Chin



No matter how you feel about the world's bestselling book, we can all use a guiding hand to help us make the most of our Bible reading. In this short, readable book, pastor and preacher Richard Chin offers you a step-by-step guide to better Bible reading: how to make sense of the Scriptures, how to avoid the most common pitfalls, and how to let God's word shape your life.

We have also made a study booklet to go with this book to help you reflect on the things you are learning. Find it on the Grow What You Know book table.

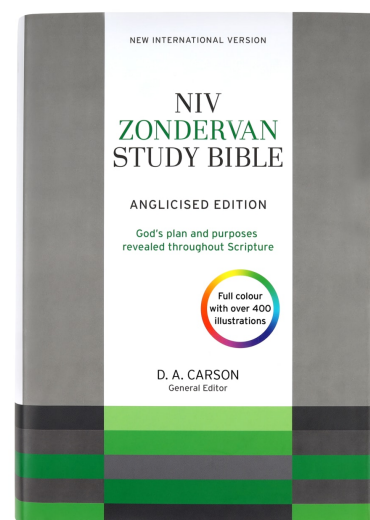
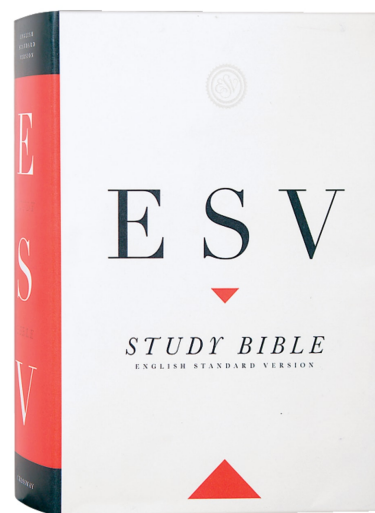
Study Bibles

A good study Bible is the no.1 discipleship tool in the Christian toolbox for people who want to look intently into the word of God and be transformed.

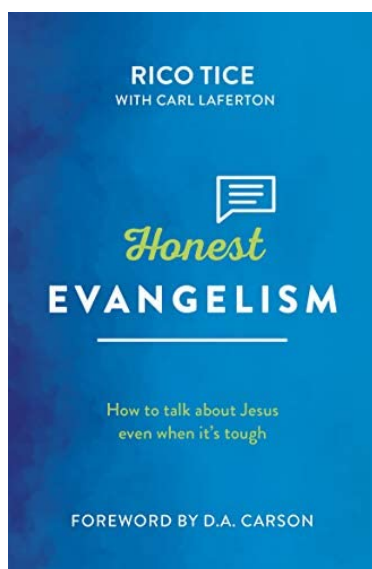
The best feature of Study Bibles are the notes on every page and every part of Scripture to help the reader understand what God is saying. They are also full of maps, pictures, and charts, as well as articles on doctrine and Christian living.

They can be expensive but are absolutely worth the cost.

Recommendations are *ESV Study Bible*, *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, or the *NIV Study Bible*. You can purchase from good Christian book stores or from the *Grow What You Know Table*.



Honest Evangelism - Rico Tice



Hostility and hunger - they're the responses to the message of Jesus. The first is painful, the second is wonderful, and Rico Tice is honest about both.

Short, clear, realistic and humorous, this book will challenge you to be honest in your conversations about Jesus, help you to know how to talk about him, and thrill you that God can and will use ordinary people to change eternal destinies.

Discipleship Goals Bookmark

This bookmark is a great tool to help us grow mature in Christ. Every year we encourage everyone to write down 3 discipleship goals.

Here are some ideas:

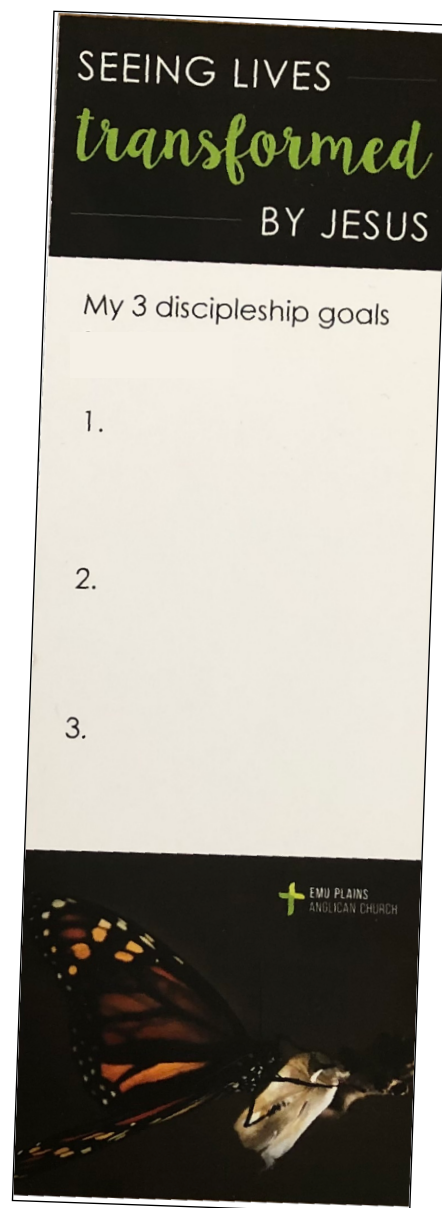
- Growing in a spiritual discipline like Bible reading, praying, gathering at church, serving, giving, or evangelism.
- Putting off sins like pride, greed or lust etc.
- Putting on Christ in growing humility, patience, or self-control.
- Deepening knowledge and conviction of the Christian faith through reading, studying, and reflecting with the help good books.
- Developing a ministry gift like explaining the gospel, reading the Bible with someone, or leading a small group.

Share your discipleship goals with your growth group so you can keep one another accountable by regularly asking how you are going and pray about them together so we might grow as disciples.

On the flip-side of the bookmark is 3 people

I'm praying will come to trust Jesus. These are 3 people God has placed in your life who don't know Jesus. You are praying they would come to trust Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. This will mean praying for growth in your relationship, for opportunities to teach the gospel, and asking for God's grace through the Spirit to bring them to repentance and faith in Christ.

Not sure what to pray? Search *'18 prayers to pray for unbelievers'*



Week 1 Sermon Notes: Life, Light, & Love
1 John 1:1-4

Something that struck me from God's word to share with GG...

Week 1 Life, Light, & Love

1 John 1:1-4

Aim: To introduce 1 John. To give confidence to believers that Jesus is the risen Christ who gives eternal life. To affirm that the eyewitnesses saw him alive, dead, and risen to life again. To give certainty that we may have not just life beyond the grave but know God himself now and into the life to come. To promote joy in those who believe!

Getting Started:

What have you experienced first-hand that you wanted others to enjoy?

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read through 1 John chapters 1-5 together as a group

Keep an eye out for the reason/s John says he wrote, and any repeated words or themes, as well as any structure you notice. Discuss what you notice?

This is designed to help appreciate the letter as a whole and observation, and discussion doesn't need to go beyond what people observe

Read 1 John 1:1-4 <NOTE it should read '4', not '14' as in study

What was John's experience of the *word of life*?

Along with the other apostles - 'we'

He has 'heard' 2x, 'seen' 4x, and 'touched' the risen Jesus.

Jesus has 'appeared' 2x

John is a witness who can testify to what he saw

What do we hear about the *word of life*? Who is he?

He's called 'the word of life', 'the life' and 'the eternal life'

He's 'from the beginning', before creation; he's appeared

What is John doing with what he has seen and heard? And why?
He's proclaiming the message and consequence of Jesus' risen appearance – eternal life for those who believe in him.
Why? So his hearers may share fellowship with him and the other eyewitnesses, and with them with the Father and the Son.
That being so - his joy (which he already has through that fellowship himself) may be complete!

Now John says why he is writing to his hearers several times. Note what he says in the table.

<i>I write / I am writing</i>	<i>Why?</i>
1:4	<i>To make our joy complete</i>
2:1	<i>So they may not sin (but if anyone does...)</i>
2:7-8	<i>Not a new command, but old, but new too ☺</i>
2:12-14	<i>To affirm his readers have the characteristics that come with trusting the Word of life – forgiven, know God/Father, overcome evil one, are strong, word abides in them</i>
2:21	<i>Not because don't know truth but because do</i>
2:26	<i>Warning about those trying to deceive them</i>
5:13	<i>So those who believe may know they have eternal life</i>

How would you sum up in one sentence why John wrote?

5:13 is a great summary

Could also say something like – John wrote his letter so those under threat of having their certainty undermined by challengers, deniers and false teachers from within and without may be confident that they truly know God and have received life.

Why is God saying this?

How should John's first-hand experience of Jesus give us confidence?

He's not spruiking a vision inside his head that can't be tested and assessed. Instead, he's providing us eye-witness testimony that the Word of life came, lived, died and rose to life again physically, historically, and publicly.

How does what John wants for his first readers display what God wants today for us and for others?

The same fellowship he/they experienced is our privilege today.

We can be sure we know God and have eternal life when we have responded to Jesus in belief.

Remember too, it's not just day-to-day life, not even life beyond death, but the depth and breadth of experiencing a loving relationship with God. And it's a message for the ages, still to be proclaimed today, as we have received and likewise point others to the eyewitnesses – their testimony recorded in the Bible.

Consider, now you've read 1 John, what might have been his top concerns for his first readers at this time and place?

To provide certainty, confidence, warning and preparation in the face of the world and those who deny the God's Christ is Jesus, who deny the reality and gravity of sin, who claim to know him and yet whose words and actions deny him, who claim to have special insight into the things of God we need not doubt that we know him and know life.

Prayer Starters

- Thank God for the visible, historic and public coming of Jesus, the Word of life
- Pray God would enable our hearts and minds to grasp and trust and rely on the eternal life he has granted us
- Pray that our joy may be made complete as God enables others to know Jesus through us

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Plan to call or catch up with someone from the group during the week to check in with how they're going. Or plan to pray for your group and let them know when you have done it.

Are there any people I should follow up this week?

Week 2 Sermon Notes: Cleansed by the Light
1 John 1:5-2:2

Something that struck me from God's word to share with GG...

Week 2: Cleansed by the Light

1 John 1:5-2:2

Aim: To see the great divide between God and the world – he is light and in him is no darkness at all. We may have fellowship with one or the other but not both. Therefore, we may see the reality and gravity of sin while not losing hope. Likewise we may be confident that God has made the atoning sacrifice for our sin and given us an advocate before the throne of God. Therefore, we confess our sins and rest assured that God forgives us and purifies us.

Getting Started:

Day and night, light and darkness – how do each affect our experiences?
I was thinking - light allows us to see and be seen and get on with things, darkness makes it hard to see or be seen and get on with things.

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

What is 'the message' and how has it travelled to its hearers v5?

V5 God is light and in him is no darkness at all. Like the 'Word of Life' label it's a stronger image than 'like light'. The result is a way to understand how God views and divides up reality.

It came to them by the testimony of the eyewitnesses, by their proclamation

What does our 'walk' (how we live) reveal about our relationship with God vv6-7?

This is the first of 3 'claim & response' items. They each follow the same general logic, it's worth seeing the shape of it.

IF we claim fellowship with God -

BUT we walk in darkness THEN we lie and DO NOT live the truth

BUT if we walk in the light, as he does THEN we have fellowship and we are purified by Jesus sacrifice from sin

Instead of dividing the world in some of the others way people come up with (seen and unseen, secular and spiritual) God sees it as those in the light, and those in the darkness. How we live - in our thoughts, actions and relationships – demonstrates which and whom we belong to!

What does our self-awareness of sin reveal about our relationship with God vv1:8-2:2?

Vv8-9

IF claim to be without sin THEN we deceive ourselves & truth NOT in us BUT if we confess our sins THEN he forgives our sins and purifies us from all unrighteousness

1:10-2:2

IF claim not sinned THEN we make him out a liar & his word NOT in us (2:1 qualification, writing so they won't sin – not encouraging them to sin more!)

BUT if we do sin (which we will in this life) THEN we have an advocate in Jesus, an atoning sacrifice for our sin, and all who believe

We need to be brutally honest with ourselves – sin is very real and terrible, even to deceiving us that we don't sin and are not sinners!

But even as we believe in Jesus we still sin (in this life) and we recognize that by taking the next step and confessing our sin and receiving forgiveness. God is there at work every step of the way – he gives us the recognition of our need, and the means to meet it

In the face of the gravity of our sin where may we find confidence for our relationship with God?

Where we are unrighteous, and sinners, Jesus is righteousness for us.

Where he has given his life as a sacrifice in death, so we need not die, but instead are purified from our sin as we receive his righteousness.

Our confidence is not found through denying our sin, but by grasping hold of the word, promise, sacrifice (of atonement turning aside God's righteous anger with our sin) and advocacy of the one who did not sin.

(An advocate is one who pleads your case to the judge on your behalf – Jesus pleads his sacrifice grants us righteousness in the heavenly court)

Why is God saying this?

Light and darkness, truth and lies, righteousness and unrighteousness - how does John help us to see the world, God, and ourselves clearly?

God orders, views and divides up reality into two parts - himself and those who know him on the one hand and those who are his enemies and don't on the other. He wants us to view it the same way.

The world, sinners and unrighteous are enemies of God. We are unrighteous unless we are made righteous by God through Jesus.

The light image picks up on light revealing those who are his and may live in step with him, and darkness being the realm of those who do not who hide (knowingly or not) from the light. Truth likewise reveals reality, whereas lies distort and hide it. Neither those of the darkness or their lies will prevail against the light and truth of God.

How may being real about our sin effect how we think and act – individually and together?

In the first place, it lines up with reality and enables us to deal with the real issues rather than paper over them and pretend they're not there. A great sacrifice was needed for the terrible gravity of our sin.

Then in God's mercy we are then well equipped and wise to recognize it, then hold ourselves and each other accountable for it, as likewise our confession is not just of our need – but his gracious remedy.

“The church is not a museum for saints; it is a hospital for sinners” - Augustine

What does it feel like to know Jesus is your advocate, and what difference may it make day by day?

I was thinking possibilities like – a relief, guilt for sin relieving, heartening, strengthening.... It means we can get beyond denying our sin (ours, and within our church, and of course the world's) and throw ourselves again and again upon his means of keeping us in his eternal life

How would you describe coming into fellowship with God and with each other to someone else?

The main issue here, as in Exodus last term, is to recognize this fellowship is all God's doing through his Son. How we think and act and relate living 'in the light' and not 'in the darkness' is not earned but the appropriate response to who he's already made us to be.

Prayer Starters

- Thank God that by his light he exposes reality - and our darkness
- Confess your sin to God
- Praise and thank him for the forgiveness he offers through Jesus our atonement and advocate

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Share with one another a ministry you are involved with and prayer suggestions for it (either one at church or beyond) and pray together. You may have time for one or two, but can do others in the future.

Are there any people I should follow up this week?

Week 3 Sermon Notes: Walk in the Light
1 John 2:3-14

Something that struck me from God's word to share with GG...

Week 3: Walk in the Light

1 John 2:3-14

Aim: To live in love, consistent with the new identity we have been given in the Son. We know we know him if we obey his word, while those who do not do not keep his commands. We either live in the light or the darkness. But this is our confidence - eternal life is ours already now through the Son. With it comes our knowledge of forgiveness, of the eternal God, and of having overcome the evil one in him.

Getting Started:

Recap with one another what you remember from 1 John so far

People may want to look at their Bibles – that's fine. The intention is to read each week in light of the whole letter. So this is a question you can use whenever it may be helpful

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read 1 John 2:3-6

How do we know if we 'know him' or are 'in him'?

If we keep v3 his commandments.

Opposite is true v4 – if we don't follow his commands don't know him

We obey his word v5

We live as Jesus lived

Each is a slightly different way of saying the same thing – that God's word rules our lives

Read 1 John 2:7-11

(Read also Jesus' words before his death in John 13:31-35)

An old command, but a new command - how is this similarity and difference connected with the Son?

What is the command? Obey God's word. Another way of putting it (and John will later in the letter) and as Jesus in John 13:34-35 – love one another. It's the same 'old' command as God gave Moses and the Israelites

way back in Exodus, but Israel couldn't keep it, they failed, they needed a new heart, a heart transformed. Jesus' life death and resurrection now makes it possible for us to love one another in a 'new' way, united with him

Verses 9-11 paint a confronting picture. How do they challenge you?

(Consider what Jesus says in Matthew 5:21-24)

People are divided between those walking in the light and walking in the darkness. Whatever we might say with our words, our love or hatred for others reveals which we/each of us dwells in. It is a challenge, but a positive challenge, to have hearts that love others and repent of hatred. Combined with Jesus' words we are pushed to stop and reflect where/when we may have been blind to this, thinking things like, 'well, I'm not a murderer', and yet not recognized the true darkness of the things we have thought, said and done to others

Read 1 John 2:12-14

This poem forms a bridge between the introduction and the remainder of the letter. What confidence and encouragement does it offer us?

It describes the transformation the Word of life has worked in all who trust in him. It expresses the 'eternal life' that is ours already now in him. It covers all people, and affirms those who believe in Jesus know forgiveness, the eternal God, and have overcome the evil one in him.

Why is God saying this?

Consider how to navigate each of these for the specifics of your group. Help people to see – as with the last study – that sin and its consequences are not someone else's problem

If we're honest with ourselves, are there areas of our lives where we don't obey God's word and keep his commands - thing we do we shouldn't, or should that we don't?

Consider the scope - loving God and loving others, and for each - the things we think, say and do, consider also - the things we should have but didn't think, say or do

Consider what you may share for yourself with the group to help them consider and perhaps share their answers

Consider the week you've just had, or the one ahead. Reflect on what opportunities you had/have to love your brothers and sisters, or areas for repentance.

This is aiming to get people to think and apply God's word in concrete terms.

How do John's words help us to hold together what we've become, and what we should do?

What we've become is the work and gift of God. What we should do flows out of that. We have eternal life (forgiven, know God, overcome evil one, word of God lives in us). So our confidence comes from him, and we may have it in the face of the threats and denials to such certainty posed by sin, the world, and the devil

Prayer Starters

- Praise God for the light of his life-giving word
- Pray God may enable us to walk as Jesus did – in love – for God and for others
- Confess and ask forgiveness for the times we have hated those we should love

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Consider who you know who would benefit from attending Christianity Explored starting this month. Would you too? Pray for those to invite, them accepting the invitation, for the proclamation of the gospel, and for repentance and faith.

Are there any people I should follow up this week?

Week 4 Sermon Notes: Do not love the World
1 John 2:15-27

Something that struck me from God's word to share with GG...

Week 4: Do not love the World

1 John 2:15-27

Aim: To not love the world or it's desires or it's false teachers. These are all passing away whereas our eternal life with God will last. Hear the warning and not be surprised by false teachers and their lies, even if they were once counted among us. Instead, remain firmly fixed upon and convicted of the truth about the Son and you will certainly receive the eternal life he has promised.

Getting Started:

Share a time someone tried to persuade you to change something significant, or you them.

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read 1 John 2:15-17

Why are love of the world and love of the Father incompatible?

V16 all in the world – lust of the flesh, eyes, & pride of life are not from the Father. The world and its desires are passing away, whereas our eternal life with the Father lasts forever.

It's the same divide already expressed in the letter between light and darkness, God and the world, those who remain in his word and those who don't

These 3 verses are the summary command/main point of the rest of the letter

Read 1 John 2:18-27

How do the antichrists and we who abide in the Father differ?

Antichrists	God's beloved
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<p><i>V18 many antichrists therefore last hour</i></p> <p><i>V19 Went out from us (Jews, believers), but if so, shows weren't genuinely one of us</i></p> <p><i>V22 liars, deny Jesus is the Christ, denies Son and Father</i></p> <p><i>V23 sp don't have the Father</i></p>	<p><i>V20-21 anointing from the Holy One, know the truth</i></p> <p><i>V23 acknowledge Son and have Father</i></p>
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So, from what is said about them, who are the antichrists?

Antichrist singular in v18 seems to be a collective identity that in reality is expressed in 'many' antichrists.

They deny the Jesus of history is the Christ of eternity.

They don't believe in or acknowledge the Son.

They are false teachers, deceivers, trying to lead believers astray.

It's worth considering the experience John describes here of these antichrists who once claimed to know the Son and eternal life. The most dangerous liars and lies are not those that are obviously way removed from the truth, but those that once claimed to believe and 'have moved on' or 'intermixed their lies with things which are true'.

What comfort comes from 'what we heard from the beginning' abiding in us?

V24-27 It will enable us to stand firm and remain in the eternal life which it first announced. God's word enables us to discern between truth and lies. We don't need another 'mediator' (or go between – that's the sense of the teacher they/we don't need here) between us and God – to interpret what he's revealed - we have the Son and his word directly, each and every one of us. That's not to say we can't have teachers – but I would say that(!) - but they must teach and be consistent with his authoritative word. They have no authority apart from that.

Why is God saying this?

In what ways do you feel the pull to love of world?

Things like – offers what initially appears desirable, satisfying, brings security, is easier. Invite specific examples. The big categories in God's word are money (and what it can buy), power (and how it can serve us), and sex (and how it makes us feel).

How may we resist and be safe from this pull?

Remain in God's word. It sounds like the often repeated 'read the Bible', and in a sense it is. But it's recognizing the power of this word, and the wonder – so compared with anything else the need to hear it, and recall it, and dwell on it, so we may keep it and are not distracted from it and the one who speaks it.

How do you react to hear John warn of false teachers who have been members of the church?

This is an ongoing reality for us today – not just them then and it has happened at every church I've been a part of to some extent.

People might be taken aback, it may trouble them, they may feel an uncertainty as to whether they or someone they respect could be such a person.

Yet God's word tells us what we need to hear though. We should not be surprised or come unstuck when this happens. It will happen. We have been warned. The warning both secures us from the false teaching itself and the challenge the experience brings that somehow eternal life is more uncertain the confidence we may have .

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Why not plan a catch up with one another over a meal for some time this term. When will it be, and what arrangements need to be made?

Prayer Starters

- Pray God's Spirit would enable us to love the Father and his will

- Pray he would prevent us from loving the world and the things of the world
- Pray he may enable us to abide in his word in the face of false teachers who deny the truth about the Son

Are there any people I should follow up this week?

Week 5 Sermon Notes: Does what we do matter?
1 John 2:28-3:12

Something that struck me from God's word to share with GG...

Study will be in the next booklet

