

How Can I Know I Have Eternal Life?

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[0 : 00] You got stuff under there. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn toward the end of your New Testament.

You'll find the book of 1 John. In fact, you have, if you work backwards, you have the book of Concordance, then you have the book of Revelation, and then you have Jude, and then 3 John, 2 John, 1 John.

So it's almost at the end there. 1 John, all new. Somber day today, isn't it?

What we're going to do today is give an overview, an introduction to this really masterful letter written by, I believe, the Apostle John, who at the time that he wrote it was most likely the last living eyewitness of Jesus Christ.

He wrote this near the end of the first century. Jesus died around 30 A.D. This is written in the 90s.

[1 : 25] Some 60-plus years later, John is probably the last eyewitness. And so what he has to say comes with great authority.

And what he's dealing with some 60 years later are various beliefs and some thoughts about who Christ was that have strayed and become quite false.

And so John is there to say, I was there. I saw him. I touched him. And this is the true gospel.

So that's, in a nutshell, what he's going to do. I want to read verses, chapter 1, verse 1. Start with 1-1. That's probably good.

And then go to chapter 2, verse 6. Just so you get a flavor. There's only 104 verses in the whole book, but there's so much that he packs in.

[2 : 32] I don't want to take too much today and get lost in the forest. So with that, that's what we're going to read. So if you're able, please stand as I read from the first letter of John, chapter 1, verse 1.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, the life was made manifest.

And we have seen it and testify to it and proclaimed to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us.

And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

[3 : 54] This is the message we heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

And the blood of Jesus' Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us.

My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous, He is the propitiation for our sins.

[5 : 11] And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments.

Whoever says, I know Him, but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in Him. But whoever keeps His Word in Him, truly the love of God is perfected.

By this we may know that we are in Him. Whoever says He abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.

So reads John. Let us pray. Father, give us Your light today. Help us to see the light which John is describing.

John has so much to say, Father. We don't want to get sidetracked into every tree that is in this forest. Help us to see the forest today.

[6 : 15] Help us just to capture where John is going, what he's writing about, why he's writing it, so that we might understand, Father, and get the big picture before we start to dig in to the fine notes.

We look forward, Father, to what You have for us. We look forward to this joy, this fellowship. We look forward, Lord, to assurance and knowing.

And so, Father, teach us through this book. Encourage us through this book. Clarify who You are and who we are.

And Father, by all means, may we get the gospel right. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Please be seated. It's water.

Just water. We ran out of water in the kitchen, so I brought my own. All right. Let's talk gauges.

Yeah, gauges.

[7 : 24] Okay. Anybody know what this is? It's a tire gauge. It gauges the tire. So it looks at the tire and says, yeah, you're good. No.

No. How does it work? How does it gauge the tire? Put it on the valve. You look through it? No, I can't see a thing. Put it on the valve stem, and what does it do? Hopefully it pops out.

This little gauge pops out. It says, oh, you got five pounds in your tire. You might want to put a few more in. All right. And you need 30 pounds in your tire, whatever, 33, depending on what kind of tire you got.

This tells you. This is a truck gauge. It goes up to 75. So... I know. Stole that from Big O, apparently. I think they left it there.

All right. Now, this is a nifty little gauge. I found this in my wife's car. She has neat stuff. This is like a super duty... Okay. It's got one of these.

[8 : 27] What's that gauge? Tape measure. What's it measure? How high? 6'5".

Oh, all right. It measures things, right? Oh, look at this. Look. There's a little thing with a bubble in it. What's that? A level.

It's a level. Uh-oh. Nope. The other way. Nope. The other way. All right. I can't work these things. What else I got?

Anything else? Ooh. Ooh. It's got a notepad on it. Cool. What's that? That's not a gauge. It's just a notepad. All right.

Let's go up a level here. Who knows what this is? Angle. Square. Square. Combination.

Combination square. Or more accurately, it's a...

[9 : 22] Angle finder. Angle finder. Angle finder. I can find the angles. So when I was putting up my siding on the house under the eaves, there's angles you got to cut.

No, I can cut straight, you know, if I have a straight blade. How do you cut that angle? Go up there and do this. Tighten it up. Ah. I take that over and I mark that off.

Oh, now I know the angle. Without having to know any geometry or anything. Gauges. What are gauges for? I had some other guys going to bring a feeler gauge.

There's metromony gauge. Whatever. There's lots of fun gauges. I bet James has a bunch of gauges. Gauges indicate things.

They indicate... So in your car, you got gauges. What you got gauges in your car? What gauges do you have in your car? Fuel. Fuel. Anybody pay attention to that one?

[10 : 27] No. Until that beeper goes off, I don't pay attention to that one. I'm getting more E's than I have F's in there. You got an oil gauge.

You got a temperature gauge. You got a battery gauge. You got a transmission gauge. Well, if you have a truck, you have a transmission gauge. You got a tire gauge in there. If you got a newer car. That's kind of cool.

You don't have to use the other one. Now it's got this other one. It says, oh, you got to fill up a little bit over here. You got a battery gauge. You got a battery gauge. Those gauges are kind of important.

Anybody pay attention to those gauges? They're kind of important. Because if the fuel one, that's the one you notice the first. You know, if that one goes out, then don't run. If the oil one goes lower and lower, it ain't going to run much longer either.

Your temperature gauge, right? Your water in your coolant tank is down. Well, you got to put the hose in there. Well, that might work for a while. Battery.

[11 : 26] Huh. Some of those cold mornings don't start. And you look at your gauge going, yeah, it's over on the E. They're very important. If you don't pay attention to them, you get in trouble, right?

Things go wrong. Gauges. They measure things. They test things. They're the means of evaluating. They can test your temperature. They can test your capacity.

They can test your genuineness. We have gauges that we look at other people by. We can judge character. We can judge character by what they say and what they do, right?

We judge authenticity. We judge truth, right? We have our own gauges. So this is a gauge. And 1 John particularly is a gauge.

It is written so that we believers have a gauge for measuring the authenticity of our Christian faith. Our Christian character.

[12 : 33] So you notice when we read those opening verses. If you say you have fellowship with God, but what? I say I know God, but I walk in darkness.

What's John say? Liar, liar, pants on fire. You can say whatever you want, but what do you do, right? Walking versus talking. Talking.

So it's a gauge. How do I know if I'm a real believer? How do I know I really know God? How do I know if I have fellowship with him? How do I know I have eternal life? How do I know I truly love the brethren?

This is what John's going to talk about through the book. And the big, big question. Look at the end of the book. Chapter 5, verse 13. John writes, like many writers of the first century, writes his purpose at the end of the book.

Okay? I've written all these things. You've got to get to the end to find the point. I've written all these things to you. Chapter 5, verse 13. I have written these things to you.

[13 : 42] Who? Who's he writing to? To you who believe. He's writing to believers. To you who believe in what? In the name of the Son of God. Not just believe in God.

Not just believe generically. But believe in the Son of God. I've written these things to you. Who believe in the name of the Son of God. Why? That you may know something.

That you may know something. That you may know with assurance. That you may know with some certainty. That you may know that you have eternal life.

So I'm writing to believers so that you have assurance of your salvation. I'm writing so that you can know that you really know. How do I know I know?

How do I know because I say something or because I pray to prayer I'm really a Christian? How do I know? That's what John is writing. I'm writing these things to you so that you can know. I'm going to give you some tests.

[14 : 41] Some criteria. Some gauges to measure. To level. Ooh. Could I? I have to know. Look at this.

All right. We're going to have some gauges. So this is an introduction. We're going to look at three basic questions. Who, what, why? Who is the author?

Who wrote this book? We'll just take a quick glance at that. What is he writing about? What's his subject? Where is he going with it? And then finally, why? What's his purpose? We just stated what his purpose is.

But we're going to clarify that a little bit more. So first of all, who is the writer of this book? It claims to be John. But as you read through this letter, you'll not find John's name in it.

Not at the beginning. Not at the end. Just like the gospel that he wrote, his name's not in there. Now, we just saw a while back the book of Revelation.

[15 : 41] That's written by John. And he puts his name in there. But here's synonymous. So who is, so it claims to be John.

And tradition says it's John. And in a moment, I'll prove to you it's, well, not prove without a doubt, but prove with great certainty that this is Apostle John is the one who wrote it.

Who's John, by the way? Just tell, what do you know about John? The Apostle John. One of the twelve. One of the twelve. He's one of the first followers of Jesus, right?

What else? He's the beloved one. The one who, in fact, the way he refers to himself in the gospels, the one who Jesus loved. Well, he didn't say it like that.

He was a fast runner. So he writes in the resurrection scene of John 20, you know, they heard Mary said, you know, he's not in the tomb.

[16:39] They ran to the tomb. Peter ran first. But John was faster. So, yeah, he's quick. He was probably younger, too. Son of thunder.

He and his brother. Who's his brother? James. James and John, sons of thunder. Sons of thunder. Sons of thunder. Their dad was a, no.

Sons of thunder because they were passionate people. And James became the first martyr quickly in the book of Acts, his brother.

John, how else has he done? What else did he write? Revelation. Wrote the book of Revelation. Gospel. Wrote the gospel called John. Wrote two other little letters after 1 John.

There's one called 2 John. There's one called 2 John. And there's one called 3 John. In those, he's called the old man. The elder. Not just any elder.

[17:39] He's really, really old. For those days. Peter and Paul died in the 60s under Nero.

Jesus died in 30 AD. Many Christians died in the 60s during the time of Nero, the persecution. John lived into the 90s.

John lived into them. He's very old. He's called the elder. The last surviving, most likely the last surviving eyewitness of Jesus.

Some 65 years after Jesus' death. Okay? He's really important. Because there's other things going around by that time.

Other thoughts going around. Other gospels going around. Okay? He's going to address that. So, let's look at the... We can understand in a book, the Bible book, scholars look at it two ways.

[18:44] What's the internal evidence of who the author is? So, in other words, in this book, what does he say about himself? What clues are we given in this letter of 1 John? Okay?

Right at the very beginning, the first four verses, he talks about his identity a little bit without giving his name. He talks about what was from the beginning, which we have what?

Heard. Which we have seen with our eyes. We have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the word of life. He claims to be an eyewitness. I heard him.

I saw him. I touched him with my own hands. Now, he doesn't say it is Jesus. What does he call what he's touched and heard and seen? He calls it verse...

He calls it the word of life. Remember the way that John began his gospel? Anybody remember? How's it open? In the beginning was... The word.

[19:42] The word. Here's the word again. The word of life. In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. The word was God. The word became flesh. Same kind of theme here.

Okay? The word of life. The word which is the eternal life. That word came, was manifested, and we not only heard him speak, we saw him with our eyes.

He was visible. He wasn't a spirit. We touched him with our hands. Okay? And he's emphasizing all those things because by that time, there were many saying Jesus didn't come in the flesh.

There was kind of this dualism starting to begin in that first century. Not quite full Gnosticism yet, but pre-Gnosticism, which is kind of separating spirit and body.

Flesh is dirty. Flesh is sinful. Spirit is good. So Jesus, the son of God, couldn't have been flesh because that's dirty. That's sinful. That's physical. Okay?

[20:44] So John's saying, no, no, no, no. If you make Jesus not in the flesh, you've got no gospel. You've got no atonement. You've got just ideas. Okay?

So that's what he's fighting. But he's claiming that eyewitness. I've seen, I've heard. And then he was manifested. So he was revealed to us. We saw him, handled him, and then we proclaim it to others.

Okay? So that's him. He's known from the beginning. He's not speaking in theory. He can speak with authority. I saw him.

I heard him. I touched him. This Jesus, this logos, this word of life was a real human being. He is the eternal word of flesh.

So he's capturing. A lot of the language sounds like the gospel as well. The word, the word, the word, right? So that's internal evidence. He speaks of a we and you.

[21 : 45] So he's not saying we inclusive. He's saying we saw, we heard, we touched, right? And then we're proclaiming it to you.

So he's not saying we all saw this existentially. He's saying, like some scholars try to read that in. Oh, he's talking about we all see God, right?

No, read what he said. He said we, a particular distinct group, saw him, heard him, touched him, and proclaim to you, a different group, who he is, okay?

And then there are external evidence. So this is confirmation. So who's the author? We can look in the book, see how he talks about himself. And then we look at external evidence. In other words, what outside the book confirms who the author is?

Okay, what does tradition say? What do other writings say? John, both the gospel and the letter of John is probably the most established first century writings that we have.

[22 : 54] Many liberal scholars want to say, oh, all of this New Testament stuff was written four or five hundred years later. Oh, you can't say that about John.

Well, you can't say it about any of it, really, but John is so documented, so authentic. He overlaps. Because he's so old, he overlaps with the next generation of Christians. And then his writings are relatively new.

Paul's writing wrote back in the 50s and the 60s. Those documents have been spread around and, you know, we got them, but nobody remembers.

You know, we just have the doc. We don't have Paul. Here you got, oh, no, I know John. Polycarp. Good name, by the way, right? Polycarp was a disciple of John the Apostle.

[23 : 52] I knew him. Oh, yeah, first, yeah, yeah, yeah. The first epistle that he wrote, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Papias, another contemporary of John.

Well, not, he was young, John was old, but contemporary, lived during the time. Quotes 1 John by A.D. 130. 130, 130, not 4th century, 5th century, 130, which is just within a generation of it.

These are 1st century documents, I don't know what I'm trying to say. Justin, who was in Rome, wrote in the 150.

Irenaeus, who was in France, wrote at the end of the 2nd century, John writing the letter. Eusebius, who was a church historian, in 325 A.D., I have it on your outline, quoting, of John's writings beside the gospel, the first of the epistles, has been accepted as unquestionably his by scholars both of the present and of the much earlier period.

What time period is he talking about? First three centuries. Okay? First two centuries, really. He's writing this at 325. So John is established.

[25 : 17] It's not only... I wanted to press this a little bit because sometimes we wonder, well, if we're a little skeptical, you know, is this really God's Word? Is this... Was it really real?

Is this stuff we can really trust? The New Testament writings are more documented than any other historical document. There are so many copies and copies that go back to old, old, old, old stuff. And when we're talking about John, really firmly established, as Eusebius said, just a couple hundred years after John.

Just no question. Nobody's questioning. Until you come to about the 19th, 20th century, then these scholars go, well, I question it.

I don't know. Yeah, you're there, buddy. All right. So who's John? John's the writer. That John that we love. One that laid on Jesus' breast.

[26 : 14] All right, the one whom Jesus told certain things that he didn't tell other people. That John. The fast John. So what's his message?

Now, I mentioned we're doing this, and some of you, I think, took me up on the suggestion to read, begin reading 1 John. John, the first time you read through John, it's kind of like, whoa, lots of stuff here.

And okay, where's he going? He's going back and forth. You know, it's a little bit. So one reading will not, you know, you're kind of going, phew. There's some great statements in here, but wow, there's a lot here.

But after you read it over and over and over and over and over, you start to pick up some things. You start to see some patterns. You start to see, oh, okay, I see what he's doing.

Anybody have first impressions on John from reading? It's not a discussion time, but you're free to, if you had some thoughts. Love.

[27 : 19] Love. Brothers. Love, loving the brothers. A lot of emphasis on love of the brothers. You find John a kind of wishy-washy guy? No, he's pretty black and white, isn't he?

Kind of reminds us of reading James. Hey, your faith's either living or your faith's dead. Right? John's kind of like, you're either walking with Jesus or you're not walking with Jesus.

It's, you know, no middle line. It's kind of that kind of guy. Family. No, not, wrong James. Oh, yeah, that's right. That James who wrote James is Jesus' younger brother, James.

The James of Sons of Thunder is, yeah, Herod did away with him early on. Book of Acts. He's a little thunderous. Too thunderous.

You're either in the light or the darkness. Yeah, he's got these categories. Truth, false. Confess, deny. Light, darkness.

[28 : 21] Love, hate. Yeah, he's a category guy. So these are the gauges, though. He's going to give gauges. Okay, and he's going to say, what did these, so how much dark am I?

How much light am I? Right? So that's what he's doing. So as I said, his purpose in 513, he's writing to believers that you may know that you have eternal life.

That's his big purpose. Okay, so on your outline, I have a structure here. I worked a lot on this. I don't want to get bogged down in it because I want you just to see the forest, not all the trees yet.

But I want you to see where he's going. As I think about how he writes, having just done the book of Revelation not long ago, this is the same guy.

He's got the same kind of structure going on. He has a prologue, the opening four verses. And then at the end of the book, he's got an epilogue.

[29 : 26] He's got an opening statement, and then he's got a closing statement at the end of the book. And then in the middle, he's got these sets of three. Remember in Revelation, he liked threes?

Remember that? He liked sevens a lot too, right? But this is a short book, so we're not doing sevens. We're just doing threes. He does lots of threes. So he's got three tests of three in this book. So he lays it out this, I think. He lays it out this way. He's giving evidence of having eternal life. What is authentic Christianity? That's what I'm tentatively calling the series.

So the first three tests, notice on your outline. First three tests. Chapter 1, verse 5 through 2, 6.

Walking the talk or making him a liar. Are you walking or just talking?

If you say, if you say, if you say, you're a liar, right? But if you walk as he walked, then you're genuine. Then you're true. Then you're in the light, you know?

[30 : 29] So his first test. Are you walking in the light or are you walking in darkness? Are you genuine? Are you real? Do you walk the talk? Or are you just all talk?

So he just cuts it down like that. Okay? And it's based on God is light. The message is God is light. So who we are as believers must reflect him.

So God is light. That means we, what? Well, therefore, we walk in light. We walk with him. We walk in light. If we're walking in darkness, how can I say I have fellowship with God if God is light and I'm over here in the darkness?

That's what he's saying. How can you, you know, walk the talk? So that's the first test. Second test begins in chapter 2, verse 7 through 17.

Now he's going to talk about love. So do you walk the walk? And then do you love your brother? So here's a different test. Do you love your brother or hate your brother? You just, it's love and hate. Do you love your brother or do you hate your brother?

[31 : 31] A true, true believer loves his brother. Okay? So second test. So third test, 2.18 to 27.

Now he's going to talk about truth issues. Right? Do you confess the truth or do you deny the truth?

Do you confess who Jesus is or do you deny who Jesus is? And who Jesus is, is the standard of the gospel from the first century.

Who Jesus is is not, well, my Jesus is this. Now you don't get to spin your own truth on this. Jesus, there's only one Jesus and that Jesus has defined himself. And John is here to say, I saw him, heard him, touched him.

This is who he was. No changing. One Jesus. But by his time, lots of different ideas. In fact, he mentions at the end of chapter 2, an antichrist.

An antichrist. In fact, he says, there are many antichrists. Many false teachers. So just in 60 years from the time of Jesus, there's all kinds of false teaching.

[32 : 35] There's all kinds of other gospels. And that's what he's dealing with. Okay? So do you walk the walk? Do you love your brothers? And do you confess the truth? Do you believe the right gospel?

Okay? And then he goes on to his next set of three, which is the same test, but in different terminology. 2.28 through 3.10. Instead of saying walking in the light, now he talks about practicing righteousness or practicing sin.

Do you practice righteousness or do you practice sin? Which is your practice? Now, some of the language in there is a little tough to read the first time. Do you still sin?

Because if you're born of the Spirit, the one born of the Spirit doesn't sin anymore. Just like, what? Is that what he's saying? Wait a minute.

Oh, boy. I'm in big trouble. Is that what he means? Well, remember what he said in the first chapter? He said, if you say you have no sin, liar, liar, pants on fire. So he's not talking about sinlessness.

[33 : 41] Okay? He's not. Because if you think you're sinless, liar, liar. The Christians that say they're sinless, and there are Christians that say that. John says, liar, liar, liar.

Come on. But at the same time, he says, but if I'm just practicing sin, if I'm always walking in the darkness, how can you say you're a believer?

But I'm practicing it. I'm practicing righteousness. I'm not good at it. I stumble a lot, right? I'm practicing. I'm learning it.

Like the disciples did. Do you get it yet, boys? Oh, yeah, Jesus, we got it. No, I don't got it. I'll never fail you, Jesus. You can count on me, right?

No. Peter, I can't count on you. I'm going to have a little girl test out your faith, boy. Okay?

[34 : 41] So practicing sin. Second test. Same thing. Different terminology. Laying down your life. So he's going to define what love is.

Love is laying down your life. What kind of love are we talking about? Oh, I have good feelings toward my brethren. No, this is what love. Here's what love is. Jesus laid down his life for us. That's love. It's sacrifice. It's self-giving. It's helping. It's costly. So do you lay down your life for your brother, or do you see his need, close your heart?

So now he puts it in real practical terms. What's loving my brother look like? Ooh. Actually meeting a need. Okay.

Okay? So practicing love. And then, again, the third test, believing. 3.19 to 4.6. Believing in Jesus' name. Before he talked about confessing truth or denying truth. Now he's talking about believing in Jesus' name or believing Antichrist.

[35 : 45] So he brings up Antichrist again. Pattern. Pattern. And then he gets into the third section. Now it mixes up a little bit.

Now it's not the one, two, three tests. Same three tests. Now he's going to combine them. Because we're going to say, wait a minute, John. You talk about, so if I walk the walk, that's one thing.

That's over here. Loving my brothers, that's Tuesday. And then believing is Thursday. Right? These are different categories. They don't have anything to do with each other. So in chapter 4, he's going to go, no, no, no. They're all mixed together.

These are just different gauges to kind of look at. But in real life, it's dynamic. The believing and loving and walking all go together.

So that's what he's going to do in the last set of 3. 4, 7 to 21. He's going to talk about the one who's been born again. He's been born again to love one another by the Spirit.

[36 : 44] Chapter 5, 1 to 5. The one who's born again, the one born of God, is born of God to overcome the world by his faith. So he's going to talk about love.

He's going to talk about overcoming the world. But in that, he's going to mix in with the born to love. He's going to mix in obedience. He's going to mix in confession of truth.

In the born of God, 5, 1 to 5. Born of God to overcome the world by faith. He's also going to talk about believing, loving, obeying. He's going to mix them all together. They all go together, in other words.

So at the beginning of the book, in 1, 5, he talks about God. Here's the message. God is light. He's going to talk about relation to God that way. If God is light, that light should be reflected in us, right?

We should be walking in light. And then in chapter 4, he's going to say God is something else. Wait a minute. God is light. What else is God? God is love.

[37 : 46] Oh, so now in chapter 4, now he's got God is light. Now he's got God is love. So now we're going to describe Christians in terms of love. So if I have fellowship with God, if I really know God, I'm going to live in the light somehow.

And if I know God and God is love, he defines love, he loves us first, then that's going to reflect in my life too, if I really know him, right?

So these are the gauges. Okay, the three basic gauges that he keeps repeating. Walk in the walk, love in the brethren, and confession, belief.

Three areas. My walk, that's between me and God. He's light, I walk in his light. Love, that's between me and my brethren. If it's real, it goes this way too.

And then what do I believe? What is the truth? Oh, I'm a Christian. What do you believe? I don't think that matters. Oh, oh, it matters.

[38 : 54] Which Jesus you believe in. Because there's only one that gives life. And he's clearly defined. And John goes to pains to clarify that.

Don't believe every spirit, he says. There's lots of spirits out there talking. There's lots of antichrists out there talking. Don't be naive and believe everything you hear, because they say they have fellowship with God.

Test those spirits. How do you test them? You test them by how did Jesus define himself? Who is Jesus? Did he come in the flesh?

Oh, yeah. He came in the flesh. So if they say he didn't come in the flesh, then they're way off base already. Okay. So. All right. So that's kind of where he's going.

Hopefully I didn't get too much detail there. There's lots of patterns. I got to writing this outline. I said, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh. There's all. I could write more stuff and make it more confusing.

[40 : 10] But you read the book and you start seeing the patterns. Spirit comes out. He is a real believer in the Trinity. He talks about the Father. He talks about the Son.

He talks about the Holy Spirit. Not just briefly. He talks about them as if they're dynamic relationships that are, you know, it's not all just orderly.

It's, oh, I know the Father. I know the Father because of the Son. Oh, that's because of the Spirit. He talks about this whole interrelation thing.

And it's not God up here. It's Micah. I have fellowship with him. I have a relationship. I know him. Not about him.

I know him. So the more you read, the more fascinating it is. So here's our third question. Why do you write the letter? I already mentioned the big purpose is that you might know you have eternal life.

[41 : 08] But he says several times in the book, he says, I'm writing this to you that. So there's four goals he has under the main overall purpose.

So in 1-4, we read in chapter 1, verse 4, we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. So his initial joy is, I want to share this truth with you.

What was from the beginning, what I've seen, what I've heard, what I've touched, this eternal life was manifested to us. We're proclaiming it to you. We want you to get this. And when you get this, we'll have fellowship together.

And our joy, our joy will be more complete. Because we enter into who Jesus is. We enter into this gospel. Right? Fellowship in the true gospel.

And then in chapter 2, as he's talking about this, what you say and what you do, in chapter 2, verse 1, he says, So he's talking about if we sin.

[42 : 20] He said twice, if you say you have not sinned, you're a liar. If you say you're not a sinner, then you're deceiving yourselves. So he's saying, I am writing not that you sin more.

I'm writing that you sin less. I'm writing so you learn how to overcome that sin, that you may not sin. And I might add, as much.

Because clearly he knows we're going to fall. But how do I deal with that? How do I begin to overcome? How do I learn to overcome? How do I learn to have victory? So that's what he's going to talk about.

That's another one of his goals. And then notice in chapter 2, 12 to 14, he talks about three different kinds of people. So three again.

And then he's going to talk to those three different kinds of people three times. So another three. He's just into threes. Maybe it's the Trinity over, I don't know what. He likes threes.

[43 : 23] So who are these groups? Chapter 2, verse 12. I'm writing to you little children. Why? Because your sins are forgiven for his namesake. I want you to have assurance about that.

I'm writing another group. I'm writing to you fathers. Why? Because you know him who is from the beginning. So you know Jesus who's from the very beginning.

Then I'm writing to a third group. I'm writing to you young men. Who are these guys? So you've got children, fathers, young men. Why? Because you've overcome the evil one.

Ooh. I don't know. Those are good guys. They've got victory. They're overcomers. They're the ones he's talking about in Revelation.

To the one who overcomes. The one who conquers. These are the conquering kind of guys. He calls them young men. And then he starts over again. Middle of 13. I write to you children because you know the Father.

[44 : 20] I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you young men. Now look what he says about the young men. I write to you young men because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one.

Wow. Those guys are pretty impressive. They're strong. The word abides in them. And that's probably why they've overcome the evil one so well. Because they're strong in the word.

So he's writing to different groups. So he's not writing to advanced Christians. He's writing to children and little children. He's writing to fathers who seem to be settled in their life.

And then he's writing to the young men on the front lines apparently. They're the fighters. They're the overcomers. They're the conquerors. And then finally a fourth group he has in chapter 2 verse 21. He brings up the subject of the Antichrist in 2.18. He says in 2.18 children it's the last hour. And as you have heard that Antichrist is coming so many Antichrists have come.

[45 : 30] So interesting. He talks about the last hour. So John has been around a long time. And the churches that he's writing to have been around a long time.

He's talking to a well-established church. Or churches. He's probably writing to the same churches as in Revelation. You know Ephesus and Pergamum and Smyrna and Colossae.

All those ones that are in that Asia Minor area. This seems to be kind of John's domain. You know Paul started those churches but John has those churches.

Those are his. Right? That he watches over. So he says it's the last hour. Wow. So this is probably written pretty close to Revelation time.

Last hour. We're at the end. Antichrist is here. They all expected Jesus to come. Signs are already there.

[46 : 35] The horsemen are out. And the flags are going. Right? Okay. So verse 21. 221. I write to you not because you don't know the truth.

But because you do know it. Because there's no lie. So I'm confirming. Who are the liars? Who's the Antichrist? Here's the truth. This is what we go by. And then verse 26. Chapter 226.

226. Here's the warning. The downside of this whole book. Okay. He's not only writing about gauges of knowing. How do I know I'm saved? But he's also writing a warning against the false teachers.

He's bringing up this Antichrist. He's bringing up people who deny him. So 226. He says. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

Okay. So he's going to write a few times in this book about these Antichrists. These deceivers. How to recognize them.

[47 : 32] These people who teach a different Jesus. They're preaching a Jesus that didn't. He couldn't. If he's the son of God.

He couldn't have taken on flesh. So he couldn't have been a man. Which means if he wasn't a man. Then there wasn't a death. And there wasn't an incarnation.

There wasn't an atonement. There wasn't propitiation. Right. If there's not a fleshly death. We have no gospel.

Okay. So he's talking about that. A different kind of Jesus. He's talking about different. These false teachers are talking about a different kind of Christianity. Oh it doesn't matter what you do. You can. As long as you say. Say the right words.

Or you know. It's your best life now. Those kind of guys. You know. Enjoy. God meant you to enjoy everything. No trial. You know. If you're going through a trial.

[48 : 32] Then you must be doing it wrong. Right. Live and be happy. And be wealthy. Okay. Those kind of guys.

There's all kinds of different guys today. Right. And gals. There's some quite prominent women false teachers. Right.

Okay. There's a lot of stuff out there. Got to be discerning. So okay. So those are his goals. And then his purpose. As I already said. 5.13.

As he writes at the end. By the way. When he wrote the gospels. Anybody know what. What was it. When he wrote the gospel. At the very end of his gospel. What was the purpose that he wrote the gospel. Anybody remember. All the way back at the end of.

The gospel of John. Chapter 20. Verse 30. I write these things to you. And he talks about signs.

[49 : 33] Signs. Anybody got it yet. Because I thought I'd quote it. And then I'm thinking. Wait a minute. I don't probably have it right. I'll mess it up.

If I weren't up here. I could probably quote it. Okay. So John 20. 30. Jesus did. So John shows signs of Jesus. Right. There's seven signs.

He gives in the gospel. Seven. Again. He's like into sevens. Seven. Signs. He. He. He walked on the water. He fed the 5,000. He. You know.

Healed the blind man. Raised Lazarus. He said. Seven signs. So he said. John 20. 30. Now Jesus did many other signs. In the presence of the disciples. Which are not written in this book.

But these. These signs. These seven signs. Are written. So that you may believe. That Jesus is the Christ. The son of God. And that by believing. He may have life in his name. What's the purpose of his gospel.

[50 : 32] That you might believe. The gospel is evangelistic. The gospel is. I want you to believe. I'm written the signs. That prove who he is.

So that you might believe. And when you believe. Then you have life in his name. So why is he right first John. Not so that you may believe. But to believers. So that you might know.

That you might have assurance. How do I know I know? How do I know if my faith is real? How do I know if my belief is real? Because there's different kinds of belief.

Is it tangible? Is it tangible? Yeah. Can I. Can I. What's the gauge? How can I gauge. Whether my. Walking is the right kind of walking.

My. My love of my brethren. Is the right kind of love. Okay. He's going to get nitty gritty. It's pretty basic stuff. But it's life.

[51 : 29] And. And what's exciting about it is. You know. Okay. Do I walk the walk? Wow. You want me to be honest? Okay.

Most of the time. Well. Does that mean I'm real? You know. Being real. What's. Do I love my brother?

Do I always love my brother? Do I always lay down my life? There's times I don't want to show up. There's times I don't.

Mentally. Show up. To something. Like the work day. I was just going through the motions. I think that's all that counted though.

Right? Yeah. No. So. We're going to look honestly at this. Right? It's not talking about perfection.

[52 : 32] It's not talking about sinlessness. He's talking about a process. How do I know? Well. Am I. Am I. Learning to walk? Am I learning to follow him?

Am I following him? Am I. Not perfectly. Not without breaks. Or failures. Okay? And my love of the brethren.

How is that? Oh. Gosh. Sometimes that's the hardest thing. Why? Because it comes at the most inconvenient times. Doesn't it?

I was really counting on having a day off. Or an evening off.

So how do I deal with it? Well. Sometimes. I don't do well. Sometimes my selfishness. My tiredness. Takes over. Doesn't it? And in those moments.

[53 : 31] I'm going. Real deal. But then there's other. So. See what I'm saying? Somebody commented that.

You read through 1 John. And it almost sounds like he's a legalist. You know. Black or white. Practice righteousness or practice sin. That's.

But read the whole thing. He's not. But he's not shy about saying. There's truth. Then there's. Not truth. Okay.

So. All right. I have no idea where we are. Time wise. There's a recurring phrase in the book. I'm not going to go. I was going to go through them all. But I'm not going to do that at this point. On your outline.

You'll see that. There's this phrase. By this we know. Ten times through the book. Keeps talking about. By this we know. By this we know. Here's the measurement. Here's the criteria. Here are the gauges.

[54 : 31] That give us assurance. That we are true Christians. So. Two. Three. We've come to know him. How do we. By this I know that I've come to know him. How do I know if I really know him.

How do I know if I personally know Jesus. Or if I just say I just know about him. How do I know if I have a real personal relationship with Jesus.

Versus. You know. I identify with him. He's a belief. How do I know? Well he says there. Two. Three. He says. There's.

Do you obey him? Do you do what he says? If you really know him. You're going to love him. And you're going to want to do what he wants you to do. Period. Period. It's not about.

Obey. Like. Oh. Task master. No. It's. This is Jesus. He's not asking us to do anything he didn't do.

[55 : 31] How do I know if I really know him? Well. Do I do what he says? He's going to get into the motive later. It's not just you've got to do what he says.

It's. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. A true born again person. Yeah. I really want to do what he wants me to do. Right.

So. So on and on. So he's going to talk about how do I. We know. By this we know we've come to know him. By this we know we're in him. How do I know if I'm really in him? By this we know who are the children of God.

Who are the children of the devil? Right. Okay. How do I know which camp I'm in? By this we know. 316. By this we know love. How do I know what real love is?

Now he's going to describe what love looks like. Because we throw that word around. What is. Oh yeah. I love God. Yeah. I love God. I really love me. I really feel for him. You know. I really. Get warm fuzzies sometimes.

[56 : 25] Is that love? Is that love? No. Love is laying down your life. 319. By this we know that we're of the truth. How do I know I'm the real deal? 324.

By this we know that he abides in us. How do I know if God is really in me? By this. 4. 2. By this we know the spirit of God. Oh. How do I know it's God's spirit.

Not some other spirit. Because it's right after he says. Don't believe every spirit. How do you know if it's God's spirit speaking to you? And not another spirit.

Because there's other spirits out there. We. Right. Ephesians 6. We put on the armor of God. Why? Because. We're in a battle. And it's not flesh and blood.

It's about the spirits in the realms. Not the creep you out. Just be aware. There are lying spirits all over there. There are lying liars. They will deceive you.

[57 : 26] They're taking down as many as they can. Before they're gone. So. So on and on. Okay. So. So. Let me end with this.

How can I. The original question is. How can I know I have eternal life? How do I know I'm real? How do I know. I'm really born again.

How do I know? So he gives three basic gauges. He talks about them in different ways. But three basic gauges. Do I walk like Jesus?

Am I seeking to follow Jesus? Am I learning to walk after him? And remember Romans 8. That Christy Redforce talks about that.

That's God's purpose is to conform us to the image of his son. So all the stuff we go through is to prune us and get us honed into more like Jesus.

[58 : 24] That's going to take a lot of pruning and work. Right? But am I on that road? Am I walking that road? Right? And it's not perfection.

It's a pattern of life. And then second question. Do I walk like Jesus? Second question is do I love my brothers? Do I lay down my life or do I close my heart? Pretty simple question.

And the third gauge, third criteria is do I confess truth in Jesus? Well, we have to define who Jesus is. What's confession?

What's believing? Who is this Jesus? What did he do? Why did he come? What am I saying? Lots of people say they believe Jesus.

John would say, how are you walking? Do you walk as he walked? Because that defines the disciple.

[59 : 24] Do you believe what he said? So, okay, those are the three gauges. How do I know? Hope you're excited.

Hope I didn't bore you here going over too much. That's what's hard with this is like there's a lot of trees in John. Right? And my temptation is to want to go, ooh, that's a pretty tree.

Let's go talk about that. So, you know, I get distracted easily. So hopefully giving you the big picture. And then now we can start having digging in. Next week, Lord willing, we'll come back and we'll look at just those first four verses.

Because those set the tone. He's going to say who this, who is this word of life? Who is this word became flesh? Who is he? What did he give us?

And then we can look at us. So, all right. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for a guy like John that you kept around so long.

[60 : 29] And you knew the reason. You knew that by the end of the century, things would get so distracted, so deceitful.

And thank you, Lord, that you kept one of your men, one of your eyewitnesses there to verify. To give authority, to put the stamp on what the real gospel is.

And what real authentic Christianity looks like. Father, we long for that. We don't believe. We wouldn't say that we have not sinned, that we have achieved that.

But we long for it. We long, Father, to be a little more authentic every day. We long to be a better walker than a talker and a better lover of our brethren.

And a true confessor of the true Jesus. So, bless our study, Father, pray. Bless our study.

[61 : 34] Prepare our hearts for it. And we know, Lord, your sovereignty, your working in our lives is always amazing as we reflect back. And I believe this will be a time that is ripe for us to look at these things.

Because that's just how you work. So, we look forward to that. We thank you, Lord. Bless our church in this way. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.