



Catherine  
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# Holiness

StudyNotes  
FOR SMALL GROUPS & PERSONAL REFLECTION

# **INTRODUCTION to the series...**

*For the proclamation of scriptural holiness...*

The Methodist Church in the UK has, as part of its constitution the following assertion:

*[The Methodist Church] ever remembers that in the providence of God Methodism was raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and declares its unfaltering resolve to be true to its divinely appointed mission.*

This series of Preaching and Bible Studies will seek to help us to reclaim that elusive charism of the Church. To be holy is to be more like God and to respond to the world in ever more Godly ways.

During the preaching series that accompanies this guide, we will look at **1 John** and **1 Peter** as we engage with the distinctly Godly desire for and the pursuit of holiness.

The Power of the Word of Life	1 John 1:2:2
Live as Jesus Did	1 John 2:2-17
The Holy Anointing	1 John 2:18-29
We Shall be Like Him	1 John 3:1-8
Believe in One Who is Greater	1 John 3:19-4:6
Be Holy!	1 Peter 1:10-21
A Holy Priesthood, A Holy People	1 Peter 2:4-12
Holy Carefulness	1 Peter 5:1-11

May God increase our faith as we walk closer to him and seek to live and serve according to his will. The following studies focus on 1 John and were originally written in a more pared-back style for the Methodist Church website publication, 'A Word in Time'.

*Enjoy the series!*

Love, *Catherine*

# Session 1: The Power of the Word of Life

## As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Who is the most powerful person in the world today?

What would you do with unlimited power? Share some fun thoughts with your group.

## Pray & Worship 10 minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which marvels at the power of God.

Pray

1. Prayers of adoration to God.
2. Prayers surrender to God's rule in your life.
3. Prayers asking for forgiveness for your own sins.
4. For assurance in your salvation through Jesus Christ.
5. For a greater understanding of Holy God.
6. For the activities of holy people to shine the light of God's love into your community.

## Read the Word 50 minutes

1 John 1:1-4 The Passion Translation

- 1 *We saw him with our very own eyes.  
We gazed upon him and heard him speak.  
Our hands actually touched him,  
the one who was from the beginning,  
the Living Expression of God.*
- 2 *This Life-Giver was made visible  
and we have seen him.  
We testify to this truth:  
the eternal Life-Giver  
lived face-to-face with the Father  
and has now dawned upon us.*
- 3 *So we proclaim to you  
what we have seen and heard  
about this Life-Giver  
so that we may share and enjoy  
this life together.  
For truly our fellowship is with the Father  
and with his Son, Jesus, the Anointed One.*
- 4 *We are writing these things to you because we want to release to you our  
fullness of joy.*

John writes his open letters to the church with the purpose of correcting the teachers around them who were saying things like 'God couldn't have

lived among us'. These teachers were trying to make people believe more in their local cultural philosophies than in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Son of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**This is where a beginning of John's call for holiness begins.**

**The 'Life-Giver' (TPT) calls us into the family relationship with God.**

**Look at and talk about the implications made in this excerpt from Calvin Samuel;**

*If God alone is holy, then only those who in some way are touched or marked by God can be holy. Only those who relate to the Holy One can be holy. P 43*

The power of the Word of Life, the Life-giver is such that it causes a quake within our word-view. Where we have been self-focussed and looked to satisfy the 'itches' of our contemporary society - John speaks the revelation of God in Christ. He challenges us to be Christ-like: the source of our salvation and growing holiness. Kevin deYoung talks about the problem with the world's view of holiness;

*The world most definitely insists on holiness. Don't let anyone tell you it doesn't. But the world's holiness is not found in being true to God; it's found in being true to yourself. And being true to yourself invariably means being true to someone else's definition of tolerance and diversity.*

P 37

**Take a moment to think about how the world's view of holiness doesn't look to you like Christ's way.**

**Where will you go to find support for a life of scriptural holiness?**

John was writing a witness statement as one who had spent time with, lived alongside, touched the hands of and breathed the same air as Jesus Christ. John reminds the churches that the other teachers with other ideas may think fancy thoughts and have carefully constructed ideas - but they don't hold up to the reality of the 'Word of life' as seen in verse 1.

Here, we hear echoes of both Genesis 1 and John 1 with references to "The Beginning" and as we are reminded of the two beginnings, we are called to remember that Jesus' was there, the Word of Creation and is, as we see it described in John 1:14, "The Word who became flesh and lived among us." 'Becoming flesh' demonstrates to everyone the 'life' available to people which is possible in Christ.

Feeling 'half-ish' about what you're doing? Jesus the Word speaks Life. Has your faith been a bit mundane and ritualistic? Jesus speaks the word of life - and it begins to have a heartbeat and a plan and a desire to break out

from inside you and to confess its existence in mission and evangelism. That which had been Law and Prophesied by faithful people of God was, literally, the life which he had spoken.

The Word of Life takes us beyond the going to work- eating our meals- doing our exercise- having a family- getting old- and dying- routine of life. John himself has witnessed the resurrected Jesus. He has received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

John knows that the confines and boundaries of death are irrelevant to those who 'have the word of life'.

**How much emphasis on the 'word of life' is there in your church?  
How could you help that emphasis to increase?**

Those who believe in Jesus, have their life in him and his life is from the Beginning and continued after he had been put to death. There are no earthly limits to life. Anyone who says that the body can't know the saving love of God is wrong, according to John's testimony. Anyone who teaches that Jesus isn't God incarnate is leading people astray, says John.

John is proclaiming eternal life.

**Why might it matter to you to have an eternal understanding of life?**

## **Reflection & Refreshment**      25 minutes

**Over refreshments, talk about the following:**

Our unity is not found in treaties and documents which 'ought' to be signed - there is no life there - no matter how well-intentioned. This was shown in the Law. True unity is found as we fellowship together in the location of the Son who is in the Father. This is where our unity is. Unforced, and unlegislated. The outworking of finding our location in Christ is that we will begin to show signs of life, and these will look like the fruit of the Spirit and be named as Joy.

**Do we try too hard to make the gospel fit our comfortable world-views?  
What does this begin to look like?**

**What challenges does your eternal perspective bring to your relationships, confession of faith and attitude to sharing the Good News of Jesus' saving love with people outside your own faith?**

**Pray for the Word of Life to have meaningful power in your life.**

# Session Two: The Power of the Word of Life II

**As you Gather** 5-10 minutes

What are the most powerful forces in nature? Which is your favourite one and why? Share some ideas with the group.

**Pray & Worship** 10 minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which about the power and holiness of God.

Pray

1. Prayers of thanksgiving for the work of God in the world.
2. Prayers of rejoicing in the hope of God for the world.
3. For a greater commitment to living in step with God.
4. For the mission of God's grace to be spread to our community.
5. For your church to be sanctified.
6. For your minister and church leadership.

**Read the Word** 50 minutes

1 John 1: 5-10 The Passion Translation

*5 This is the life-giving message we heard him share and it's still ringing in our ears. We now repeat his words to you: God is pure light. You will never find even a trace of darkness in him.*

*6 If we claim that we share life with him, but keep walking in the realm of darkness, we're fooling ourselves and not living the truth. 7 But if we keep living in the pure light that surrounds him, we share unbroken fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, continually cleanses us from all sin.*

*8 If we boast that we have no sin, we're only fooling ourselves and are strangers to the truth. 9 But if we freely admit our sins when his light uncovers them, he will be faithful to forgive us every time. God is just to forgive us our sins because of Christ, and he will continue to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*10 If we claim that we're not guilty of sin when God uncovers it with his light, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.*

**"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all"** verse 5 (NIV™)

In this opening chapter of John's first letter, we find the same emphasis on Light that we find in Genesis 1 and John's own Gospel, chapter 1. There is an emphasis on Word and also on Light. Whereas the Son is described as 'Word' it is the Father who is described as "Light". The presence and the ways of God are denoted by his light. The first words of Creation are to call light into being. It is in the presence of that light that everything else is

born: trees & plants; the sun, moon & stars; living creatures and people. We will see in the Bible how God is a pillar of Light to guide his people in the Wilderness after they left Egypt for the Promised Land. We will note that Jesus says of himself “I am the Light of the World”.

**Think about Light being created first.**

**Why does this matter for everything and why does it matter for you?**

God’s presence is light which is welcoming and warm. It is hope at the end of a long journey. It is that which reveals cobwebs in well-dusted rooms and potholes on well-maintained roads. God’s light reveals danger and sends darkness to the places far beyond its reach.

The power of the word of life is also to shine light into the dark places of our lives and to move us towards repentance. Once we see the dust in the room or the cobwebs, the holes in the road - we have a responsibility to act.

Kevin deYoung points out;

*The Spirit is power but he is also a light. He shines into the dark places of our hearts and convicts us of sin (John 16:7-11). P 82*

**How does the power of that light feel in your life?**

**How do you know when the Spirit is ‘convicting you’ or pointing out to your conscience something that needs to be dealt with?**

Jesus tells us to not fear when we walk through dark places with him. This is really comforting and hopeful. God is light and when we walk in the light of his presence all is well.

Light is more powerful than simple light-casting. Light reveals and allows nothing to hide. We stand too far from the light and a strong, long shadow is cast in which faults, failings, guilt, shame and fear may hide.

**Where are you standing in proximity to The Light?**

**What difference would it make for you to step closer to the Light of God?**

Walking in the edges of light, we still recognise that light is good and feel like we may know the light, so long have we walked there. However, dodging the light by stepping into the shadow is where we begin to lose sight of God’s pure radiance.

Calvin Samuel helpfully shows us that;

*What Jesus demonstrates then, is that to be holy is to love our neighbours as ourselves; it is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, strength and mind; it is to give ourselves completely over to God even if*

*it leads to suffering and death. What does holiness look like? Holiness looks like God; holiness looks like Christ. P21*

God's people are called to step fully into the light and to live the transformed life that comes from living fully in the light, so close to its source that shadows are not possible, save under your feet.

**Find the passage in the New Testament that is referred to. Why did this matter to Jesus?**

**Talk about the process of holiness or 'sanctification' in your life. Are there areas in which holiness is more difficult to achieve than others?**

**Are you able to see progress? (Keeping going is progress!)**

This process - and it is a continual action in the pursuit of holiness. Allowing God in Christ to put to death on the cross the things that are not holy and true. Jesus has already died for them and defeated them in his Crucifixion and Resurrection.

There is no place for darkness in God. There is no room for sin - things we know in our heart of hearts that are not God's best. Holiness is a process. Bit by bit, we become more like God in our actions and attitudes to his Word and the World.

## **Reflection & Refreshment**      25 minutes

**Over refreshments, talk about the following:**

It is like sitting in an uncomfortable dark cave - damp from lack of light and cold also because the sun never penetrates just here. As you sit in the cave mouth, you can see all that is light and lovely and good and are able to commentate and offer good opinion on the light and its benefits - even let the light touch your face and allow it's touch to transform that part of you which you let the light touch - gracious speech, gentle words that flow from your mouth show the potential of transformation that can come from letting the light shine onto your light.

*The very idea of a man being 'sanctified' while no holiness can be seen in his life is flat nonsense and a misuse of words. Light may be very dim; but if there is only a spark in a dark room, it will be seen. Life may be very feeble; but if the pulse only beats a little, it will be felt. It is just the same with a sanctified man; his sanctification will be something felt and seen, though he himself may not understand it. A 'saint' in whom nothing can be seen but worldliness or sin is a kind of monster not recognised in the Bible! P31 J.C Ryle*

**Pray for a more visible holiness in your mission and witness, individually and as a group.**

# Session Three: Live as Jesus Did

## **As you Gather**      5-10 minutes

Talk about how you are drawn to follow things... a particular sports team, novelist, TV series, film franchise, radio broadcast, fads and fashions... Be prepared to have a giggle at yourself - be gentle!

## **Pray & Worship**      10 minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which asks for the closeness of God.

### Pray

1. That you might see the life of Jesus within you.
2. That the ways of Jesus would flow from your life.
3. That the atoning sacrifice of Jesus would be your salvation.
4. That you would live faithful and Godly lives.

## **Read the Word**      50 minutes

### 1 John 2:1-11      The Passion Translation

*You are my dear children, and I write these things to you so that you won't sin. But if anyone does sin, we continually have a forgiving Redeemer who is face-to-face with the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 Here's how we can be sure that we've truly come to know God: if we keep his commands. 4 If someone claims, "I have come to know God by experience," yet doesn't keep God's commands, he is a phoney and the truth finds no place in him. 5 But the love of God will be perfected within the one who obeys God's Word.*

*We can be sure that we've truly come to live in intimacy with God, 6 not just by saying, "I am intimate with God," but by walking in the footsteps of Jesus. 7 Beloved, I'm not writing a new commandment to you, but an old one that you had from the beginning, and you've already heard it. 8 Yet, in a sense, it is a new commandment, as its truth is made manifest both in Christ and in you, because the darkness is disappearing and the true light is already blazing. 9 Anyone who says, "I am in the light," while holding hatred in his heart toward a fellow believer is still in the darkness. 10 But the one who truly loves a fellow believer lives in the light, and there is nothing in him that will cause someone else to stumble. 11 But whoever hates a fellow believer lives in the darkness—stumbling around in the dark with no clue where he is going, for he is blinded by the darkness.*

The context for John's writing continues to be The Light. The Light in Chapter 2 will have a determining influence on the Christian people - an influence of transformation. As the apostle John writes to his friends - whom here he calls "My little children" and in other versions "My dear children" - we find him offering the sage advice of a parent to their children.

**How do you react to John's parental tone? Do you warm to it? Share your viewpoints.**

John is continuing to address the teachings which were leading Christians away from the reality of Jesus being fully human and fully God, which he personally knew through his own interactions with Jesus.

There is genuine affection for the Christians and he extends a desire for them to remain close to God through Jesus in their actions and lifestyle as well as in their profession of faith.

**How might we show our support and love for people around us who have committed to follow Christ but whom you know to be struggling?**

For John, our refocus should be through the lens of Jesus and his atoning sacrifice for our sins. That we sin is a 'given' for John. He does not try to cover up a Christian's falling short of God's perfection with platitudes. He knows that our pull away from God to please ourselves will often be too great to resist, but he does not allow us to lose hope...

**What is your gut reaction to the term 'sin'?**

**Is 'sin' a relevant term for Christians to be using in today's world?**

Calvin Samuel suggests that the term 'sin' has lost its power and its meaning in our society. This can be a challenge to our pursuit of holiness. If we join with the world in ignoring sin, we find no need to discover God and salvation and so to live a holy life.

*The idea of sin only makes sense when there is a deity to be offended. It is that relationship to the deity which causes something to be perceived not merely as wrong but also as sinful. Sin is therefore a meaningless concept in an atheistic framework. It's one reason therefore why 'sin' is such an uncomfortable word in contemporary culture. P 42*

The perfection that we seek is the place in which we find our peace. This peace is a gift from God and nothing of human manufacture.

We might find rest for our minds in our hobbies and the busying of our hands, in the completing of a crossword or number puzzle which allows our focus to come away from the heaviness of life and the weight of our decision-making.

**Find the account of Jesus meeting Zaccheaus in your Bible.**

**Note how he was drawn to find Jesus and to see him.**

**Look at what Calvin Samuel has to say about this and discuss the work of grace with each other;**

*This is 'prevenient grace', the grace that goes before, the grace that draws us to God. In Jesus we see a radical holiness, willing to see God's grace reflected in the most tarnished and hated of tax collectors. And in Zaccheaus we see prevenient grace, drawing him towards such holiness.*

P 7

Being drawn towards Jesus, towards the attractiveness of his life and his words is where we find our sanctifying peace.

The Christian life is a series of returning to Christ in his atoning sacrifice - who, as our advocate brings together the human and the divine. Now, we recognise that we are not perfect and neither are we hopeless.

Our behaviour, attitude and understanding of God and consequently our response to the world around us is determined by our closeness to the Cross of Jesus.

**What does Jesus being 'an atoning sacrifice for our sins' mean for you?**

## **Reflection & Refreshment**      25 minutes

**Over refreshments, talk about the following:**

The greater our understanding of our need for salvation and our need of a divine nudge toward holiness; the better we live a holy and gracious life.

*It is in this way that we show the Love of God in Christ to the world.*

Are we still sinners? Yes.

Do we sin in ways that we have rationalised as 'this is okay actually'?

More than likely.

Are we therefore not Christian? John says not.

*Our Saviour continues to work his salvation within us as our advocate, citing his atoning sacrifice for our sins and with great hope, for the sins of all the world.*

**Pray for a closer walk with Jesus for each of your group members.**

**Pray for an outpouring of salvation in your church and community.**

# Session Four: Live as Jesus Did II

## Mini Study

**Pray** For God to shine his light on his word as you draw close to him

### 1 John 2:12-17. The Passion Translation

*12 I remind you, dear children: your sins have been permanently removed because of the power of his name.*

*13 I remind you, fathers and mothers: you have a relationship with the One who has existed from the beginning.*

*And I remind you, young people: you have defeated the Evil One.*

*14 I write these things to you, dear children, because you truly have a relationship with the Father. I write these things, fathers and mothers, because you have had a true relationship with him who is from the beginning. And I write these things, young people, because you are strong, the Word of God is treasured in your hearts, and you have defeated the Evil One.*

*15 Don't set the affections of your heart on this world or in loving the things of the world. The love of the Father and the love of the world are incompatible. 16 For all that the world can offer us—the gratification of our flesh, the allurements of the things of the world, and the obsession with status and importance—none of these things come from the Father but from the world. 17 This world and its desires are in the process of passing away, but those who love to do the will of God live forever.*

John's letter is a call for the people of God to focus their lives on Jesus and on the saving love of Christ through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. In this way, lives are completely transformed as the encounter with Jesus' sacrifice leads God's people into a new kingdom.

In this new kingdom, God's way and will is the rule and his people desire to live in accordance with it.

Jesus' ministry on earth was that of proclaiming that 'the Kingdom of God is near' and to 'repent and believe in the gospel' Mark Chapter 1:15.

The people to whom John was writing had their focus turned from Jesus to complicated 'problems' that so-called teachers of faith were putting in front of them. The reality is that Jesus' cross would forever be the place of transformation as people entered into the Kingdom of God where living within his will would be the single issue.

It is easy to layer up the 'problems' with Christianity to the exclusion of the vast and amazing gift of God in Jesus Christ. We make policies and plans

that are sweet and well-meant, often worthwhile in themselves, but where they are the motivation in themselves, they miss the point of the Gospel.

**What is the message you proclaim in your everyday?**

**Maybe it is one of love, or of hope or of care or of peace or of gratitude.**

**How might that message also carry the presence of the Kingdom of God brought near in Jesus?**

It is from within Jesus' person - from inside the now open Kingdom of Heaven - that we live out our faith through care and concern and giving and political agitation and coffee mornings and room lettings for the community. John points out that we understand the will of God through truly belonging to him. John points out that our focus firstly on the world will result in a love for the world which trumps our love for God.

In many ways, this small passage takes us back to the words of Jesus in Mark's Gospel; 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.' 12:30-31

**Make a list of 3 things that are most important to you.**

**What do they look like from 'inside Christ?'**

The people to whom John is writing are not a small sample of the church, but they include children - likely those who are young in faith when we look at the opening words John's letter. They include the old and wise and everyone in between, as we see in verses 12-14.

**Do we limit the scope of Jesus' love by the limits we place on the potential faith of children or the new to faith? What could be done to improve this?**

John is stating that their faith makes them different. The faith we have in God through Christ makes a difference. We begin with our focus on Jesus and then begin to look at the things of the world through the lens of salvation. The safest place for all people is in Christ. Our evangelistic task is to bring them there, and to not be sidetracked by good-looking things that would shift our focus from 'The One through whom all things are made' to the things... John 1:3.

**Looking at verse 15, pray for yourself, your group and your church**

**What impresses you most about the way that Jesus lived? Commit to learning one new Christ-like attribute for your every-day life.**

# Session Five: The Holy Anointing

## ***As you Gather***      *5-10 minutes*

Discuss the names of local places or your own surnames. Do they have obvious meanings or easily attributable puns?

What can you do with the name of your street, town, city? *For example: My home village is "Fylingthorpe"... Where - ahem - "high flyers come from"*

## ***Pray & Worship***      *10 minutes*

*Sing* a hymn or a song which invites the presence of God

*Pray*

1. That you might see the rule of God at work in you.
2. That the justice of God would sweep through our community.
3. That the community where you live might be turned to God.
4. That you would live faithful and Godly lives.
5. For prophets and preachers to proclaim the truth of God's word.

## ***Read the Word***      *50 minutes*

1 John 2:18-21. The Passion Translation

*18 Dear children, the end of this age is near! You have heard that Antichrist is arising, and in fact, many enemies of Christ have already appeared, and this is how we know that we are living in the closing hour of this age.*

*19 For even though they were once a part of us, they withdrew from us because they were never really of our number. For if they had truly belonged to us they would have continued with us. By leaving our community of believers they made it obvious that they never really belonged to us.*

*20 But the Holy One has anointed you and you all know the truth. 21 So I'm writing you not because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and no lie belongs to the truth.*

As John opens this section, those he addresses are back to being 'children' or 'my dear children' as they were in the opening words of chapter 2. The voice is one of parental intimacy that is imbued with warmth and gentleness.

We are reminded that John was with Jesus, that he is addressing them from an almost unique perspective. John has been alongside Jesus as he watched Jesus bring about the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven through his breaking of false paradigms and untrue, unworthy systems that the religious society was perpetuating.

John is reminding the church- the children of the Kingdom or as Paul will put it, Christ's 'co-heirs' that they belong to the truth. In verse 20 he uses words that are about belonging, inclusion and commission.

**There should be an urgency to our evangelistic task.**

**How much of the mission of your local church is about deliberately opening up the Kingdom of God to embrace others?**

The Holy One's anointing brings the knowledge of truth that responds to the world with Christ's own eyes. Out of the transforming love of God, there is a desire to feed the hungry, reach out and restore the outcast and offer a place within the family to those whom no one wants to have anything to do with. We are holy as we work under the anointing of the Holy One.

This is inclusion in the ministry and mission of Jesus. It is born of transformed hearts and minds. When we are holy, in right relationship with God through Jesus, we respond to the world with holy attitudes and actions.

**Where do you see this at work among the fellowship of your church?**

**In the church's wider mission?**

The 'truth' which is where knowledge comes from is not an ex-Jesus sophisticated re-alignment of worldview; it is born as we are born again 'in Christ' and is 'of the character of Christ' which is where our knowledge of truth resides.

Anything that opposes Jesus and his understanding of the Kingdom of God is anti-Christ. It speaks of the world's infiltration and opposition to the saving love of God found in Jesus Christ.

**Where do you see the 'world' directly opposing the things of Christ and 'in Christ'?**

*For example, where Christians are persecuted, that is anti-Christ behaviour. Where the 'truths' are distorted, that is anti-Christ activity.*

John Wesley's social holiness was born out of the passion he had for Jesus Christ and his recognition that the salvation that was his is also for all. This is not some historical Methodist doctrinal artefact that is to be brought out and viewed fondly every few years.

**Can actions be holy if they don't come from a holy heart? Why do you think so?**

## **Reflection & Refreshment**     25 minutes

Unless we are participators in the Kingdom through the body of Jesus, we have no Kingdom knowledge, no belonging and no anointing.

The passion that Wesley knew, is for all to be full participators in the life that comes from Jesus and to know the truth of full transformation of a person as they enter through Jesus' body into the Kingdom of God.

This is a real and present promise and gives life and conviction to the people of God.

**How do you measure truth?**

**Is there a sliding scale for the truth that Jesus brings?**

**Test out your thinking by looking for a conclusion and work out how strong your argument is.**

**Pray for the church in this present age.**

**That she can be holy in an anti-Christ social climate.**

**Pray for protection for all Christians.**

**Especially pray for Church leaders and those who have responsibility for Church policy-making.**

**May they be holy as God is holy.**

**Pray for yourself. That you may live under the holy anointing of God.**

# Session Six: The Holy Anointing II

## Mini-Study

**Pray** For God to reveal the truth of his word as you spend time with him.

### 1 John 2:22-28 The Passion Translation

*22 Who is the real liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. He is the real antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever rejects the Son rejects the Father. Whoever embraces the Son embraces the Father also. 24 So you must be sure to keep the message burning in your hearts; that is, the message of life you heard from the beginning. If you do, you will always be living in close fellowship with the Son and with the Father. 25 And he himself has promised us the never-ending life of the ages to come!*

*26 I've written these things about those who are attempting to lead you astray. 27 But the wonderful anointing you have received from God is so much greater than their deception and now lives in you. There's no need for anyone to keep teaching you. His anointing teaches you all that you need to know, for it will lead you into truth, not a counterfeit. So just as the anointing has taught you, remain in him.*

*28 And now, dear children, remain in him, so that when he is revealed we may have joyful confidence and not be ashamed when we stand before him at his appearing.*

Abiding or 'remaining' in Jesus takes us back to John 15 and the memory of Jesus commanding his disciples to abide or remain in him and to be his friends. Remaining is an important part of John's message in the gospel and also here at the close of Chapter 2.

Remaining close to Jesus is the place where we choose to live - abiding, living, thriving within the Kingdom which is open to all through the person of Jesus.

This section is one which is strongly trinitarian in its teaching: it reminds us of the absolute relationship of the Son with the Father. It is not possible to deny Jesus' divinity and to claim a knowledge of God. John describes the ones who deny Jesus' divinity as 'anti-Christ'. The truth begins to fall apart where Jesus is not at the centre.

**If you imagine your life as a wheel which turns on the hub of Jesus, how balanced is that wheel?**

We can think of this as living out a Jesus-Centric life. With Jesus as the central point from which all our decisions, actions and philosophies derive.

He is in the middle of it all. It is Jesus centred or pro-Christ and shows the life of the truth that is at work within the people of God. Abiding in Jesus has consequences. The consequences are a holy life which exudes Godliness.

**Can you think of a shift of focus which would weight your life to run more smoothly with Jesus as the centre?**

John shows us here that a knowledge of God which is based entirely on theories will be insufficient, and will eventually lead to a Christ-less existence which can only ever be partial.

In Jesus is the anointing of God, the revelation of his Son through whom eternal life is found.

Abide. Remain. These are powerful words, especially in today's culture which is fragmented and is piece-meal. Remaining is a word full of heaviness, maybe even suggesting a ponderous intransigence in one's approach to life.

**When is staying close to Jesus easiest?**

**How can you bring more of this into your everyday?**

As Jesus describes it in John 15, remaining in him is the source from which mission and evangelism, proclamation and social action flow.

The well-spring of fuel for faith is to be planted in Jesus so that the fruit of our thinking and acting and planning and loving is sourced from his own rootedness in Father God.

Instead of being words of heaviness, remaining, abiding in Jesus give lightness and joy to our faith which is not weighted by well-meaning theories but is full with hope and the light of eternity.

Stepping into a relationship with Jesus, according to John will teach the believer the way to live a life of truth which is expectant and hopeful as the light of God shines through the believer into the world. Abide. Remain.

These are words of acceleration in the mission of the Kingdom of God.

John persists in calling the Christians to whom he writes 'little Children'. As we see this in terms of parental intimacy we can consider John's concern.

**Is your faith vulnerable and easily preyed upon?**

**Are you open to being teachable like a child?**

**Pray that God will keep you close to his heart in Christ Jesus and that you will grow in holiness and faith.**



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# Encourage One Another & Build Each Other Up 1 Thessalonians 5: 11

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