



LETTERS OF John

 1 & 2 & 3 John

EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE with Thick Skin & A Soft Heart

2 John 1:1-13 NLT

INTRODUCTION Band plays softly underneath... Welcome | Engage Audience | Letters Series

ILLUSTRATION: FOUR SQUARE (Wait for Cue Picture) Game I used to play in grade school... It was made up of four quadrants and in the top quadrant you were in control... You had the ability to serve and start the game. This game, just like life could get pretty competitive. It was faced with lots of challenges. You could have people trying to take you out. People who formed alliances with you. You could work together with others who and your strengths could compliment each other. You could have been made fun of or even betrayed...

How does life's challenges & struggles reveal what I truly believe? What are my reactions & thoughts towards compromising situations & mindsets that I'm not ready for? **(TITLE & PRAYER)**

John wants nothing more than to give us confidence that we can walk out our faith without compromise... That we can live in truth & love.

2 John 1:1-13 NLT

*This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to the chosen lady & to her children, whom I love in the truth as does everyone else who knows the truth **2** because the truth lives in us & will be with us forever.*

3 Grace, mercy & peace, which come from God the Father & from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father will continue to be with us who live in truth & love.

4 How happy I was to meet some of your children & find them living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded. **5 I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we should love one another. This is not a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning. 6 Love means doing what God has commanded us & he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning.**

7 I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver & an antichrist. **8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. 9** Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father & the Son. **10** If anyone comes to your meeting & does not teach the truth about Christ, **don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. 11** Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.

12 I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper & ink. For I hope to visit you soon & talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete. **13** Greetings from the children of your sister, chosen by God.

What an amazing passage we have here... John lays it out plain and simple...

KNOWING THE TRUTH COMES FROM KNOWING GOD & JESUS (Verse 1-3)

When we know the Truth, we truly begin to Love the Truth.

The Truth, Spirit of God lives in us & will be with us... So no matter what challenges we face we can hold on to the fact that God will always be with us forever.

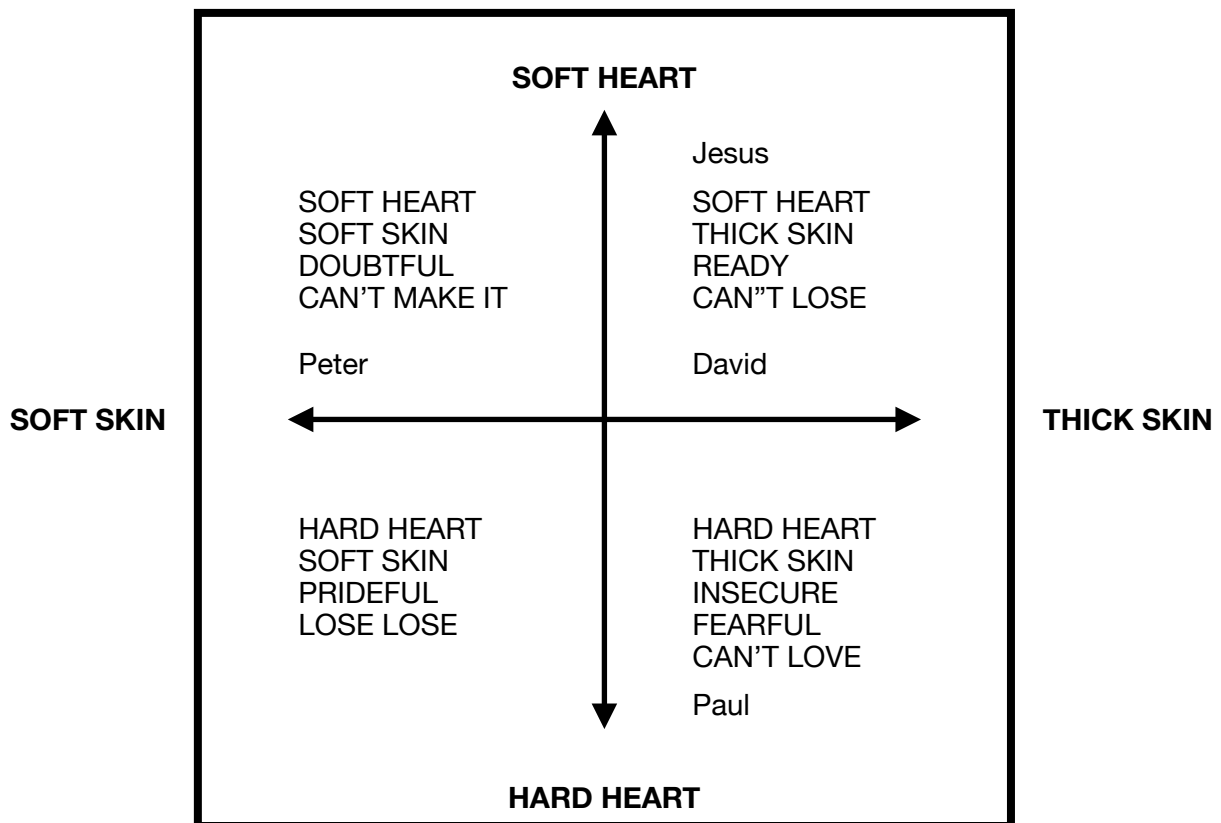
2 John 1:3 NLT

Grace, mercy & peace, which come from God the Father & from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father will continue to be with us who live in truth & love.

How many of us have experienced Grace, Mercy & Peace? Would you agree with me that it's a struggle to live a life that models those three things? Isn't it funny how something challenging or wrong can rob you of your Grace, Mercy & Peace? The enemy would want nothing more than to get us to lose sight of the truth that those things naturally come from and follow those who live in Truth & Love.

There are some of us here today that have allowed short moments or things from our past to keep us from allowing Grace, Mercy & Peace to follow us... (Traffic, Relationships, Parenting, Work dynamics, stress, marriages, etc...) **PERSONAL STORY... Thick Skin, Soft Hearts**

ILLUSTRATION



Hebrews 4:16 NLT

So let us come boldly to the throne of our Gracious God. There we will receive His Mercy & we will find Grace to help us when we need it most.

HAVING A SOFT HEART IS A TREASURE WORTH PROTECTING (Verse 4-6)

The soft heart is not a thing to harden but a treasure to protect. Soft hearts are quick to extend Grace, Mercy, Compassion, Refuge and God's Peace to the world...

What did Jesus command us to do?

John 13:34 NLT

I am giving you a new commandment: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other."

Matthew 22:37,39 NLT

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul & all your mind." 39 A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Some of us will never get God's will in our life if we don't obey God's way for my life. God's way is that I would love my neighbor as myself, but I'll never learn how to love people unless I know how to love me!

Some of us have got to learn how to see ourselves as how God sees us!
You are Loved... You are fearfully & wonderfully made...

His thoughts of you outnumber the grains of sand on the earth... **Psalms 139:17-18**

ILLUSTRATION (Picture of Sand)

10 Square feet of beach at a depth of 3m would have around 163 Billion grains of sand...

1 Handful of sand would be over 10,000 grains of sand, which is more than the number of stars we can see with the naked eye.

What happens when we follow Jesus?
We move from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh.

The real problem with sin is not about bad behavior. Jesus didn't come for behavior modification, he came for heart transformation.

HAVING THICK SKIN IS NOT ABOUT BEING STRONG (Verses 7-11)

*7 I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver & an antichrist. **8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward.** 9 Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father & the Son. **10 If anyone comes to your meeting & does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement.** 11 Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.*

God hasn't called us to toughen up against people, but to equip ourselves against the lies of the evil one...

I love how John encourages us to watch out... watch out for those who have denied Christ... Those who are deceivers & liars... To be on guard. To walk with discernment, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. To hold fast onto the truth who is Jesus.

Does that mean that we don't talk to them? Does that mean that we avoid them at all cost? Do we live our lives completely set apart never to see them again? NO!!! How absurd is that? What's loving about that?

Jesus was a friend of sinners...

Matthew 9:13 He didn't come to call the righteous but sinners...

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God...

Romans 5:8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners...

Why should we be passionate about people? Because God is passionate about people!

Jesus didn't just die to forgive you, He rose so that He could live through you.

Having Thick Skin means you love others with a Soft Heart but you never do anything lightly or without purpose...

What John wrote in verse 10-11 was about protecting their homes as in church... Where did people meet during those times? He wanted to protect the church & make sure that they weren't encouraging false teaching... Love them but don't give them a platform or an opportunity to share what is the work of evil...

Having Thick Skin & Soft Hearts makes you ready & you can't lose... How do we get there?

Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

HAVING THICK SKIN REQUIRES A NEW MIND

What does Romans tell us? This isn't about positive thinking...

Romans 12:2 *Don't copy the behavior & customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good & pleasing and perfect.*

There's that spiritual formation. What have you been formed into?

What is the inner man, the inner woman actually look like? What's the shaping of your soul?

CLOSING | NEXT STEPS | Worship Team Come Back