



LETTERS OF John

1 & 2 & 3 John

The Letters of John | “Church Hurt”

1 John 4:1-21

I've been hurt by the church. → Have you been hurt by the church? → 1 Jn. 4:1-21

→ Many people are leaving “the church” because of “church hurt.” It's a real thing! I will likely never understand why Jesus left us with such an important community to manage. Most of the time, it comes down to teaching, application of that teaching, and a failure to love like Jesus. So, how can WE, since we are the church, live with God loving through us? How can we learn from these experiences to become a safe community for people to grow in their relationship with Jesus?

→ **How can we learn from these experiences and prevent future church hurt?** → BP Graphic → Download, [Click here!](#)

→ **Text Background:** John writes to rebut deceptive teaching advocating for compromise. His churches were influenced by Gnostics who believed “sin” was ignorance of spirit's superiority over matter, thus anything done in the body didn't matter; Cerinthians, a specific form of Gnosticism; and the Docetists who believed Jesus was only a divine mirage. John challenges our faith through the right view of Jesus (**doctrine**) & keeping His commands/love (**praxis**).

1 John 4:1-21: *Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2 This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. 3 But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.*

4 But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. 5 Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. 6 But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

Not every church speaks by the Spirit of truth. → Are we testing the content we are consuming? → Pitcher of water.

- **Assurance:** You can test someone's teaching (1). If you belong to God, you have the HS living in you (4).
- **Test the spirit behind the message!** → What do they say about Jesus? → Do they speak from the world's viewpoint?
 - Know the Word. → Have mentors. → Listen to the Spirit speaking to YOU.
 - Make sure your church has a leadership structure with checks and balances.
 - “*In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.*” - Marco Antonio de Dominis (1617)

→ **TRANSITION:** Not every church speaks by the Spirit of truth and it is our responsibility to test the content of sermons, songs, services, books, etc. Next...we need to get the order right...the order of what?

7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10 This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

13 And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

Not every church gets the order right.→Are we trying to love people without first being loved?→We run out...

- "you put the wrong emPHAsis on the wrong syLLAble," - Mike Myers→**Keep the main thing the MAIN THING!**
- Why don't we do this?→We do not believe we are worthy of love...were trying to earn salvation.→This screws it up.
 - **Worth** is measured by what is given in exchange for something.→Jesus' sacrifice!
 - Jesus loved by his actions towards us (10) BEFORE...→**Journal:** Sacrifice. Forgiveness. Healing. Provision.
 - It is easy to slip into **legalism**→loving without first being loved (earning salvation).→People can FEEL this.
- When I am trusting God's love for me, I love my wife, kids, & friends with God's love channeling through me.

→TRANSITION: Not every church gets the order right and the only way to love like God is by letting God love us FIRST. We recognize his love by what he DID. Next, it's easy to fall back into old patterns...so we need to ABIDE in His love.

17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first.

20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

Not every church loves without fear.→Are we abiding in God?→Worship, Scripture, Prayer→Sauna

- Signs we are "abide" in God→We aren't afraid!→**Pay attention to the signs of fear popping up in your life.**
 - We aren't afraid of the future (17).→I look forward to Jesus' return bc I want to be with him. That is a sign.
 - We aren't afraid of people (20).→I can love people...who are vastly different than me. That's a sign.
- **Abide in God:** Develop disciplines that grow your relationship with God.→Free Spiritual Growth Pan: [Click here!](#)
- VISION: RFKC Vision.→Prayer: Lord, lead us to YOUR way.

→TRANSITION: Not every church loves without fear. Two of the warning signs are our fear of the future and inability to love people like Jesus would love people. We must ABIDE in His love.

→**I am the church. I will live with these intentions so others, including myself, can heal from the hurt.**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. Have I ever experience "church hurt?" Was I responsible in any way?
2. What are three expectations I need to live out in order to be a safe place for others to call home?
3. Which of the three exceptions do I struggle to live out the most? Why?
4. What would happen within our churches if we loved each other like Jesus loves us?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help us to discern deception, get the order of God's love right, & love without fear."

QUOTES:

- *"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."* - Augustine
- *"you put the wrong emPHAsis on the wrong syLLAble,"* - Mike Myers

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GRAPHICS / VIDEOS:

- Bible Project **123 John Graphic**: [Click here!](#)
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SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **1 John 2:1-2** - 2 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. 2 He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

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