



Dear Church,

What you believe shapes how you live. This is a phrase that we use and hear from the Sunday pulpit often and the idea is that your beliefs inform your decisions and relationships. The first epistle of the apostle John is written primarily to Christians who were lukewarm or apathetic to their commitment with Jesus.

By the time John wrote this letter, he was an elderly man. He was the last apostle and the only one to escape martyrdom. John is also referred to as the one “whom Jesus loved” and in his letter, his love for Jesus and his love for people are inescapable. John is writing from experience in having walked with Jesus, suffered much, and with a pastoral heart in an effort to exhort and encourage Christians who are tempted and confused about false doctrine and spiritual trends to turn to Jesus because it is our belief in Jesus that not only shapes how we live, but exposes the condition of our heart. That is, whether or not we truly know Him.

I am very excited about this series because many of the challenges that Christians faced during this time are similar to some of the things we see today. Christians are confused about biblical truths and are often tempted and lured by false doctrine and teaching. Further, John’s letter exposes that if we say we believe in Jesus, then there is fruit as a result of that belief.

My hope and prayer is that we would grow in our confidence in God and His work for us, in us, and through us in Christ. I pray that we would demonstrate grace-filled courage and boldness to tell others, as John does, about Jesus Christ. I pray that we would see people come to know Jesus. And I pray that our hearts would be sanctified to know Jesus better in this study.

Warmly,

Pastor Marco

## INTRODUCTION

### What Is A Missional Community?

Missional Communities are small gatherings of people that meet weekly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears.

Missional Communities (MCs) serve as the main vehicle of discipleship, care, and mission at Storehouse Community Church and we believe that the mission of MCs is to be a family of disciples on mission for the glory of God.

Each MC is unique and shaped by the people who attend and the city they meet in. And at the heart of each MC is a desire to gather as family and friends, grow in our relationship with Jesus, and go into our cities on mission.

### Why Should I Join A Missional Community?

The Bible teaches us that God is relational, personal, and invested which, in turn, means that we are created for friendship and community. MCs are more than a weekly event, but a time to grow and cultivate a relationship with God and others.

### Where Do Missional Communities Meet?

MCs are strategically planted throughout McAllen and its surrounding cities in an effort to engage our city and community. Whether meeting at a home, local coffee shop, or college campus, we desire to see every aspect of our cities blessed by God's people.

### How Do I Get Connected?

There are two ways that you can get connected. You can visit our Connect desk on Sunday and our volunteers will help you through the process or you can visit [storehousemcallen.com/communities](https://storehousemcallen.com/communities) to learn more and sign up!

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [The Godly Man's Picture by Thomas Watson](#)

Written during the puritan era, The Godly Man's picture "shows how attractive the grace of God is. Christians of all stages, reading it for the first time, will feel as if they have entered the gallery of a great portrait painter."

2. [Experiencing the Trinity: The Grace of God for the People of God by Joe Thorn](#)

"For Christians, there is only one simple yet profound answer: turn to the triune God. *Experiencing the Trinity* contains 50 down-to-earth meditations on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Overflowing with scriptural truth, pastoral wisdom, and personal honesty, this book reflects on common experiences of doubt, fear, and temptation—pointing readers to the grace that God provides and the strength that he promises."

3. [Knowing God by J.I. Packer](#)

"*Knowing God* seeks to transform and enrich the Christian understanding of God. Explaining both who God is and how we can relate to him, Packer divides his book into three sections: The first directs our attention to how and why we know God, the second to the attributes of God and the third to the benefits enjoyed by those who know him intimately. This guide leads readers into a greater understanding of God while providing advice to gaining a closer relationship with him as a result."

## IMPORTANT DATES | SPRING 2020

### FEBRUARY 2020

1. Spring Membership Class | Sunday, February 9th and 16th | 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m

We host our membership class twice a year (Spring and Fall semester) and in this two-day class, we walk through our doctrine, mission, and culture at Storehouse McAllen. Both days are required in order to pursue membership. Childcare and lunch are provided. Visit [storehousemcallen.com](http://storehousemcallen.com) to register or email [cristina@storehousemcallen.com](mailto:cristina@storehousemcallen.com).

2. Ash Wednesday Service | Wednesday, February 26th | 6:00 p.m.

We observe the start of the Lenten season with an Ash Wednesday service that is held at the Old Church Winery. Ash Wednesday serves as an opportunity to examine the condition of our hearts, repent of sin, and enter into a season of fasting in order to draw near to God. Learn more on our blog at [storehousemcallen.com](http://storehousemcallen.com)

### MARCH 2020

1. Family Gathering | Sunday, March 22nd | 12:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m

Family Gatherings serve as member meetings for those who are covenant members at Storehouse McAllen and are held twice a year. In these gatherings, we celebrate the affirmation of new members through prayer, receive updates, and enjoy a feast together in fellowship. In order to participate in the Family Gathering, you will have needed to walk through the membership process. Questions? Email [cristina@storehousemcallen.com](mailto:cristina@storehousemcallen.com)

### APRIL 2020

1. Parenting Workshop | Saturday, April 4th | 9:00 a.m. - TBA

We're hosting a parenting workshop in April and currently finishing up all of the details. We are looking to have two main sessions and three breakout sessions. The workshop will be held at the McAllen Incubator and childcare will be provided and there will be a small cost for the workshop. Visit our website, [storehousemcallen.com](http://storehousemcallen.com), to stay posted on new details.

2. New Visitor Lunch | Sunday, April 5th | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The new visitor lunch is held at Roosevelt's at 7 and serves as a great opportunity to meet our pastor and other leaders at Storehouse McAllen over really good food. Additionally, we walk through our story, values, and provide some time for Q&A.

3. Holy Week | Sunday, April 5th - Sunday, April 12th

Holy Week is a season that we place great emphasis on at Storehouse McAllen and it only continues to grow and improve every year. Beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with Resurrection Sunday, Holy Week is a time where we reflect, mourn, and celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Savior. Visit our website to learn more about our services during this week.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week One | 1 John 1:1-4

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (study together)

- :::John uses the term "fellowship" twice to describe our relationship with God and with one another. What does "fellowship" mean? In what ways has this term become watered down in church culture?
- :::How does John's description of fellowship challenge us to refresh our vision of the church's gatherings (Sunday morning, missional community, hanging out, etc.)?
- :::Why is fellowship with God and one another vital to the Christian life?
- :::What would it look like to love one another in our everyday lives?

#### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

- :::Pray that the group's fellowship with God and one another would grow and deepen during this study.
- :::Confess sin to one another, remove obstacles that may be hindering fellowship with God and one another by speaking gospel truths to one another.
- :::Encourage one another to purposely spend time with God this week.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Two | 1 John 1:5-10

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (study together)

:::John exposes three incorrect methods that some use in trying to qualify for fellowship with God.

What are these three false bases for fellowship with God that John rejects? What are the marks of genuine fellowship with God?

:::Our theme in 1 John is "walking in the light." How does your faith in Jesus change your view of sin?

:::Why is repentance such an important part of the Christian life? What are the consequences if we are unwilling to repent?

:::Do you consider yourself someone who is quick to repent? What causes us to delay repenting?

#### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::If you have time, encourage the group to break off into smaller groups (2-3) and set time aside for confession, prayer, and encouragement.

:::Jesus desires for us to live by faith in Him, trusting his cleansing work, and not ours. Pray that you (and your group) would "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" knowing that "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Three | 1 John 2:1-11

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::Does Jesus' advocacy encourage you to seek him when you sin? Why or why not?

:::In the first chapter, John addresses sin and forgiveness. Now, he addresses love. In addition to renewed communion with God, with whom else is our fellowship restored by the gospel?

:::Why do you think John emphasizes our love for other Christians as much as he does?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Encourage one another to confess their sin and to be encouraged that they have an advocate, Jesus.

:::Pray that God would graciously develop meaningful relationships in the group and our church throughout this study. This week, spent time with someone outside of your group (dinner, coffee, etc) and listen to their story and pray with them.

:::Additionally, encourage the group to examine their hearts. If there is someone they (or you) are not on good terms with, encourage them to ask for or extend forgiveness.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Four | 1 John 2:12-17

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::What are the marks of one who loves the Father?

:::What does it mean that our sins are forgiven by God "for his name's sake"?

:::According to John, what does having a love for "the world" and the things of the world indicate about our relationship with God?

:::What does John say about the world and its desires that helps us to see how abstaining from these sins is not loss but is for our ultimate gain?

:::What would it look like to fight and avoid worldly temptations in our daily life?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::When you pray for one another this week, speak the gospel to one another--graciously and boldly. Remind those who have placed their faith in Jesus that their righteousness is based on what Jesus has done for them, not on what we do for God.

:::Ask each person to share areas in their life that may be based on the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, or pride of life. If there are temptations, how can each of you encourage one another and hold one another accountable in some of these areas this week?

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Five | 1 John 2:18--27

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::Why is it important to regularly ask the Holy Spirit to teach you?

:::Apart from the leading of the Holy Spirit, another way to combat false teaching, according to John, is to know and remember the gospel. Out of everything he could have said, why do you think John said this?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Pray that the group's love and devotion to the Church mirrors that of Jesus. And that you would grow in discernment to detect false teaching.

:::Pray and encourage one another to guard each other from false teachings in their own lives and should there be error, to have others lovingly address it, point back to the promises of God in Christ, and repent.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Six | 1 John 2:28-3:10

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- :::John expresses a sense of urgency for us to abide in Christ so that we may have confidence when he returns. What does it mean to abide in Christ? How does Jesus' imminent return alter our faith, daily lives, and priorities?
- :::John says that God is a Father, we are his children, and we are to love other Christians as brothers and sisters. Why do you think John emphasizes these family relationships?
- :::If we are not growing in the likeness of Christ, to whose image does John warn us we might be conforming ourselves?
- :::John exhorts his readers to pursue the righteousness of Christ. In verse 10, what does John emphasize as the chief expression of that righteousness?
- :::Why was it important for Jesus to be without sin? What does his sinlessness have to do with our personal relationship with God? (See Hebrews 7:27 and 10:10)

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

- :::Pray that your group would live as salt and light in the world and seek opportunities to proclaim the gospel to nonbelievers in their life.
- :::Are there individuals who may be enslaved to a pattern of sin? Pray and provide encouragement and support to help them overcome it. Challenge the group to consider how they can love one another through the process of repentance.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Seven | 1 John 3:11-18

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::John tells us to love one another and then provide an example of how not to love one another. What are some things we can learn from Cain's example about how not to treat one another?

:::Love requires sacrifice. But one does not have to die in order to show love. How ought we to sacrifice in order to show Christlike love?

:::John says that our love for other Christians is one barometer of our faith in Christ. Read 1 John 3:15. How does this change our relationship with God and others?

:::Why is it impossible for us to say we love God and yet hate others? Even the church? Why is this a big deal to John?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::As a group, pray for one another to be empowered by the grace of God and the Holy to respond in love when the world expresses hate.

:::Spend time confessing sin, praying, and encouraging one another.

:::This week, prayerfully consider identifying an individual or family whose material needs you can meet. Explore opportunities to love others the way Jesus has loved you.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Eight | 1 John 3:19-24

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::Our deeds of love must be deeds of true love. It is God's commandments that teach us true love, by both convicting us and comforting us. What two kinds of responses does John encourage in light of the convictions and comforts of God's commandments (vv. 22-23)?

:::What do we learn from this passage about the correlation between our life and our prayers?

:::John makes following God sound so simple: Believe in Jesus and love one another. Are there ways you tend to overcomplicate or add to what it means to glorify and enjoy God?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Pray for the ability to enjoy the simple life of loving God and one another.

:::How is the Holy Spirit at work in your life and in the lives of others in the group?

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Nine | 1 John 4:1-6

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::Why does John encourage us to “test the spirits”? How does this change the way we accept or reject teaching from others?

:::John places great emphasis on “listening.” What are some “voices” in our society that seek to shape us and how can we ensure that it is the teaching of the apostles that shape us instead?

:::What are two characteristics we learn about non-Christians in 1 John 4:5-6

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict and lead the group away from false teachings and that the group would be able to discern true prophets from false ones.

:::Pray that the group would “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Ten | 1 John 4:7-21

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::John is adamant: it is impossible to know God but not love others. Which expressions in this paragraph do you find most convicting concerning the absolutely necessity for Christians to love? Why are they so convicting?

:::What does someone's lack of love for others say about them?

:::How is love defined in 1 John 4:10-11? How does this definition of love change how we ought to love others?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Have you ever doubted God's love for you? When? Pray for members of the group who have struggled with receiving or doubting God's love for them.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Eleven | 1 John 5:1-5

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::What is the basis for our being “born of God” and what is the fruit that follows in those who are indeed born of God?

:::John exhorts his readers to love one another throughout his epistle. Genuine love is more than a warm feeling. What does genuine love actually look like (compare Galatians 5:14)?

:::How is obeying God out of love different from obeying him out of fear?

:::How are we capable of overcoming the temptations and sins of the world?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Temptation is not a sin, but it is an opportunity to sin or to obey God. Pray for one another capability of overcoming sin and temptations.

:::Confess and pray for one another to live God’s freedom in light of what Jesus has done for you.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Twelve | 1 John 5:6-13

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

:::We bear witness with words, but the Spirit bore witness to Jesus with signs. What do these two signs (the water and the blood) certify concerning Jesus? What does faith in these signs certify concerning those who believe in Jesus?

:::How do John's words in 1 John 5:10-12 address the modern idea that all religions are basically the same and lead to God?

:::Why is God's testimony about Jesus important? What does He testify about his Son?

RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

:::Pray that the group would preserve in Christ through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who has done a work in them and is doing a work through them.

:::Think of three people that you know (split into small groups) who do not know Jesus and pray for them by name today.

## 1 JOHN | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



### DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Week Thirteen | 1 John 5:14-21

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- :::How does the theme of a love for God, love for one another, and victory over sin all find practical expression in prayer?
- :::What does it mean to pray according to God's will? Do you have confidence in God similar to what John expresses?
- :::By definition, an "idol" serves as a focal point for expressing one's love for the deity it represents. Where are the children of God to look for God's "image" in order to show our love for him?
- :::What is your initial response when you observe a brother or sister in Christ sinning? How does John encourage us to respond in those situations? What does this mean for the local church (see Galatians 6:1)?

### RESPONSE (pray, confess, act)

- :::John's epistle ends with three things convictions that undergird our confidence in Christ. What are they? Pray each of these over one another.
- :::Pray that you would grow in your confidence in God, expressing mercy and grace, and the fleeing of idols.