

The 1st letter that John wrote (The book in the Holy Bible called *1 John*) About this letter

John wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago. That was about 60 years after Jesus went back to heaven. This letter is now in the Holy Bible.

John was one of Jesus's 12 special workers. He went everywhere with Jesus, and he knew Jesus well.

At the time when John wrote this letter, he was an old man. He was a church leader, and lots of people respected him. He lived in a place called Ephesus, in the country that we now call Turkey. There were churches in lots of the towns near there, and John wrote this letter to those churches.

At that time, there were some bad teachers that went around telling lies in the churches. Some of them said that Jesus was not the special man that God promised to send. And some of them said it doesn't matter if Christians do bad things. So John wrote this letter to tell the Christians not to listen to those bad teachers. He told the Christians that they have to keep on believing God's true message and stay joined up with Jesus. And he told them that they have to keep on loving each other, just like God loves them. John wanted those Christians

to be really sure that they belonged to God, and that they will live for ever with God.

This letter is still very important for us today. There are lots of people in the world today that don't believe God's true message and don't live God's way. Sometimes those people make trouble for Christians, and sometimes they try to get Christians to go wrong. This letter helps us Christians remember that we are joined up with Jesus, so we can stay strong and keep living God's way. And it helps us remember to always love each other, just like God loves us.

John called Jesus the word of life

¹⁻² You know the one that was always with God right from the start, the one that was with God our father before God made anything. God sent him to the earth as a man, and God showed him to us mob. We saw him with our own eyes, and we heard him talk, and we touched him with our own hands. We are telling you, he is the one that gives new life, so that people can live with God for ever. So he is called *the word of life*.*

³ We saw him, and we heard him, and now we are telling you mob about him. You see, we want to make sure that you know him too. Then you will be joined up with us, like we are in the same family. And all of us will be joined up with God our father, and with his son Jesus Christ. ⁴ That's the reason why we are writing this letter to you mob. Yes, we want to make

* 1:1-2 John 1:1, 14

sure that you properly know God. That will make us really happy.

God can make us properly clean inside

⁵ Now we are going to tell you mob a special message. Jesus Christ told us that message, and now we are telling it to you. It is about God. He is properly good, and he never does anything bad. He is like a light that's always really bright and never goes dark at all.

⁶ So think about this. If somebody says that they are joined up with God, but they keep on doing bad things all the time, that person is lying. They don't know God, and they don't live his way. It's like they are walking in the dark.

⁷ But if we always try to do what is right, just like God always does what is right, it's like we are walking in the light. If we live like that, it shows that we are in God's family, and we are joined up with all the other people in God's family. And we know that God's son Jesus died for us, and he takes away all the bad things we do. It's like his blood washes us and makes us properly clean inside.

⁸ You know, we all do bad things. If we reckon that we never do anything bad, we are just tricking ourselves. If we talk like that, it shows that we don't know God's true message.

⁹ But if we pray to God and talk straight about the bad things we do, and if we tell him that we are sorry, then he will let go of those bad things, and he will never do payback to us. And he will make us properly clean inside. God promised

that he will do that, and he always keeps his promises, he always does what is right.

¹⁰ Think about this too. God tells us in his book that everybody does bad things. So if you reckon that you never did anything bad, you are saying that God is a liar, and you are not listening to his true message at all.

2

Jesus died for us

¹⁻² Listen, my Christian friends. I am like your father, and you are like my kids. I am writing these things to you because I want you to live the right way, and I don't want you to do anything bad at all. But if any Christian does do something bad, then God our father will not get angry and punish them. You see, Jesus Christ died for us. He never did anything bad at all, but he died to take away all the bad things that we did. He is with God now, and he asks God to help us. So now God will say that we are not guilty. And you know, Jesus didn't only die for us mob. He died for everybody in the world.

If we properly know God, we will live his way

³ I'll tell you how we can be sure that we properly know God. If we always listen to God and do what he says, that shows that we properly know him.

⁴ Maybe somebody will say, "I know God." But they don't listen to God, and they don't do what he says. Well, that person is lying. If they don't listen to God, that shows that they don't

really know him, and they don't believe his true message.

⁵ But if anyone listens to God and does what he says, it shows that God's love is truly in that person.

I'll tell you how we can be sure that we are joined up with God.

⁶ If we reckon we are joined up with God, then we have to live the way that Jesus lived. He always lived God's way.

We have to love each other

⁷ My friends, I'm telling you that God wants us to love each other. I know that's not a new message for you. You heard it from the beginning, right from the time you first heard about Jesus.*

⁸ And you know that Jesus always loved people. He didn't just love people a little bit. He loved people properly, and now we are loving people properly too. In that way, it is a new message for the world. It's like we used to live in the dark, we didn't know the true story and we did bad things, but now there is a bright light shining in the world.

⁹ But think about this. Maybe somebody will say, "I live in God's light, I live God's way." But maybe that person hates another Christian. Then that person is lying. They are not really living God's way. It's like they are still living in the dark.

¹⁰ So I'm telling you mob, you have to love other Christians. If you do that, it shows that

* **2:7** John 13:34

you are living God's way. It is like you are living in God's light, and nothing makes you go wrong.

¹¹ But if anybody hates another Christian, it's like they are walking around in the dark, so they can't see properly. They don't understand God's true message, and they don't live God's way.

John said good things about his Christian friends

¹² Listen, my Christian friends. I'm talking to you now like you are my kids.

I know that Jesus died for you, so God let go of all the bad things that you did, and he says that you are not guilty.

¹³ All right. Now I'm talking to some of you that are wise adults.

You properly know Jesus Christ. You know that he was always there, right from the start of everything.

And now I'm talking to some of you that are strong young men.

The devil, that boss over the bad spirits, he tried to get you to go wrong, but you said *no* to him.

It's like you had a fight with him, and you won.

Yes, all of you are like my kids.

God is our father, and you mob properly know him.

That's the reason why I'm writing this letter to you.

¹⁴ Yes, some of you are wise adults.

You properly know Jesus Christ. You know that he was always there, right from the start of everything.

That's the reason why I'm writing this letter to you.

And yes, some of you are strong young men.

You are strong for God.

And you properly listen to God's word, so it's like God's word lives right inside you.

And you won against the devil.

Don't live like the people that belong to this world

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ You know, the people that belong to this world, they go against God all the time.

Sometimes they do bad things just because it feels good. And sometimes they are greedy, like they want to get lots of things for themselves.

And sometimes they talk up big about themselves, so that other people will think they are important. But God our father doesn't want us to live that way. If anybody loves doing those bad things, it shows that they don't love God. The people that belong to this world, they love doing those bad things. I'm telling you, don't live like those people. Don't love doing those bad things.

¹⁷ You know, one day, God will finish up this world, and he will finish up all those bad things in this world. But God will never finish up the people that love him and live his way. Those people will live with God for ever.

Some people are enemies of Jesus Christ

¹⁸ My Christian friends, listen to this. We know that these are the last days of this world, and soon Jesus will come back. Remember we told you that Jesus Christ's enemy is going to come in the last days of this world. Well, lots of Jesus's enemies are already here. So we know for sure that these are the last days of this world.

¹⁹ Those enemies of Jesus, they used to be part of our Christian mob. But later on, they left us, so now we know that they were not real Christians. You see, real Christians stay joined together. But those enemies of Jesus, they left us. That shows that they are not part of us Christian mob.

Jesus Christ's enemies tell lies, but Christians know the true story

²⁰ But you mob are real Christians. Jesus put the Holy Spirit in you, and you all know the true message about Jesus.

²¹ So I'm not writing this letter to tell you that message again. No, I'm writing to you because you already know that true message. That message is properly true, and there are no lies in it.

²² But those enemies of Jesus Christ, they tell really big lies. They say that Jesus is not the special man that God promised to send. That's the biggest lie that anyone can tell. The people that tell those lies, they turned against God the father and against his son Jesus.

²³ I'm telling you, if anyone turns against Jesus and tells lies about him, that person does

not belong to God the father. But everyone that tells the true story about Jesus, they belong to God the father.

You have to stay joined up with Jesus

²⁴ Remember that time when you first heard the good news about Jesus? I'm telling you mob, you have to keep on believing that good news. Then it will be like that good news lives right inside you. And if that good news lives inside you, then you will stay joined up with God's son Jesus, and with God the father.

²⁵ And you know, Jesus made a special promise to everyone that is joined up with him. He promised to give us new life, so that we will live with God for ever.

²⁶ I'm writing these things because I want you to watch out. That other mob are trying to get you to go the wrong way. ²⁷ But I know that you will be all right, because Jesus gave you the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in you, and he teaches you everything that you need to know about Jesus. Everything that he teaches you is true, he never lies. There is nobody else that can teach you in that way. And you know that the Holy Spirit taught you to stay joined up with Jesus, so make sure you do that.

When Jesus comes back, we will not be frightened

²⁸ My Christian friends, I am like your father, and you are like my kids. I'm telling you to stay joined up with Jesus. You know that one day, Jesus will come back to this earth, and everybody will see him. And if we are joined up

with Jesus, then we will be happy to meet him on that day. We will not feel frightened, and we will not feel any shame.

²⁹ You know that Jesus is properly good, and he always does what is right. Well, it's the same for those people that are joined up with Jesus. They always try to live God's way and do what is right. So if you live that way, you can be sure that you are one of God's kids.

3

We are God's kids

¹ Just think about this. God our father, he really loves us a lot. He loves us so much that he takes us into his family, and he says that we are his kids. And that's true. We really are God's kids. But the people that belong to this world, they don't know God, so they don't understand that we are God's kids.*

² My friends, we are already God's kids now, and that's a really good thing. But later, on the day when Jesus comes back, God will do even more good things for us. You see, on that day, God will change us, so that we will be like Jesus. We don't understand everything about that yet, but we know for sure that it will happen. Yes, we will see Jesus, we will see what he is like, and we will become just like him.

³ All of us mob believe that, and it makes us really happy. And we try to be like Jesus now. You know that Jesus is properly good, he never

* **3:1** John 1:12

does anything bad. So we always try to keep away from doing anything bad too.

God's kids live the right way

⁴ You know that God's law tells people the right way to live. So if anyone keeps on doing bad things, they are going against God's law. That's right. People that do bad things, they break God's law.

⁵ But Jesus came to this earth to take away the bad things that people do. And you know that Jesus never did anything bad at all.*

⁶ So if anyone is joined up with Jesus, they will not keep on doing bad things. If anyone keeps on doing bad things, it shows that they don't know Jesus at all. They don't understand who Jesus really is.

⁷ My friends, that other mob are telling you lies. They reckon that people can keep on doing bad things, and that God will still say they are all right. But that's not true. Don't believe them. I'm telling you, God's people have to live the right way, just like Jesus always lived the right way, and then God will say they are all right.

⁸ If anyone keeps on doing bad things, it shows that they belong to the devil. The devil is the boss over all the bad spirits. Everything he does is bad. Yes, he always did bad things, right from the time when God made everything. So if anyone keeps on doing bad things, it's like they are one of the devil's kids. The devil always gets people to go wrong, but you know, God's

* **3:5** John 1:29

son Jesus came to earth to stop the devil's work for ever.

⁹ If anyone belongs to God, they don't keep on doing bad things. It's like they are one of God's kids, and God gave them new life. So they can't keep on doing bad things.

¹⁰ So this is how we can know which people belong to God, and which people belong to the devil. If somebody does not live the right way, then we know that they don't belong to God. And if somebody does not love other Christians, then we know that they don't belong to God either.

Christians have to love each other

¹¹ Yes, I'm telling you, we Christians have to love each other. You already know that message. You heard it from the beginning, right from the time you first heard about Jesus.*

¹² Remember that old story in God's book, about Cain and Abel. They were brothers. Cain belonged to the devil, and he did bad things. But Abel lived God's way. So Cain hated Abel, and he killed him. But we can't be like that. We can't hate people or kill people.*

¹³ Listen, my friends. There are people in this world that are just like Cain. They hate people that live God's way, so they will hate you too. Don't be shocked about that.

¹⁴ But we are not like those people. You see, God gave us new life. It's like our spirits used to be dead, but now they are alive. We know that

* **3:11** John 13:34 * **3:12** Genesis 4:8

we have new life because we love other Christians. That shows that our spirits are alive. But if anyone does not love other Christians, that shows that their spirit is still dead.*

¹⁵ You know, if you hate another Christian, God says that is really bad. He says it is just like you killed that other Christian. And we know that if you kill somebody, you do not have new life from God, and you can't live with God for ever. So it's the same if you hate another Christian, you do not have new life from God, and you can't live with God for ever.

Jesus showed us how to love people properly

¹⁶ Do you want to know how to love people properly? Think about Jesus. He really loved us a lot. He loved us so much that he died to save us. In the same way, we have to be ready to do anything to help other Christians. Yes, we even have to be ready to die for them.

¹⁷ Think about this. Some of us Christians have food and money. Well, if we see another Christian that needs help, like maybe they don't have enough food or clothes or something, then we have to feel sorry for them, and we have to help them. If we don't do that, then we are not loving people in the way that God loves them.

¹⁸ My Christian friends, we can't just say that we love people and then do nothing. No. We have to love people properly, and do things to help them.

We can be sure that we belong to God

* **3:14** John 5:24

19-20 If we love people properly, then we are living God's way, and we will know for sure that we belong to God. And if we ever feel shame, and if we think maybe we don't belong to God, we can remember that God knows everything, and he says that we belong to him. Then we will feel happy inside ourselves. We have to trust what God says, not the way we feel.

21 Yes, my friends, if we know that we belong to God, and we don't feel shame, then we will not feel frightened to talk to him.

22 We know that we are doing the things that God tells us to do, and we are living in a way that makes him happy. So we can be sure that God will hear us when we pray, and he will give us whatever we ask for.

23 And this is what God tells us to do. We have to believe in God's son Jesus Christ, and we have to love each other, just like he told us to do.*

24 If anyone does those things, they are joined up with God, and God is joined up with them. Yes, God put his spirit in us, so we know for sure that God is joined up with us.

4

Only believe God's true messages

¹ Listen, my friends. Don't believe every message that somebody tells you. First, you have to find out if that message comes from God's spirit. There are lots of people in the

* **3:23** John 13:34; 15:12, 17

world that tell lies about God. They say that their messages come from God's spirit, but really their messages come from bad spirits.

² This is how you can know if a person has God's spirit in them. If that person believes that Jesus Christ came and lived as a human being here on earth, and if they tell people that true story, then you can know that they belong to God, and they have God's spirit in them.

³ But if they do not believe that Jesus Christ came to earth as a human being, they do not belong to God, and they do not have God's spirit in them. Those people have a bad spirit working in them. That bad spirit is the enemy of Jesus Christ. You know we told you that Jesus's enemy will come into the world. Well, that enemy is already here in the world, and he gets people to tell lies about Jesus.

⁴ My friends, you belong to God, and he is much stronger than that enemy that is in the world. God's spirit is in you, so you do not believe those people that tell lies about Jesus. It's like you won against those liars.

⁵ Those liars don't belong to God, they belong to this world. So their messages come from this world, and the other people that belong to this world, they listen to them.

⁶ But us mob, we belong to God, and our message comes from God. So the people that properly know God, they listen to us. But the people that don't know God, they don't listen to us.

If somebody listens to us, you know that they have the true story from God's spirit, and the messages they tell are true. But if somebody doesn't listen to us, you know that they don't have the true story. The messages they tell are lies, and those lies come from bad spirits.

God showed us real love

⁷ My friends, we Christians all have to love each other. You know, love comes from God. He is the one that helps us love each other properly. So if we love other Christians properly, that shows that we know God, and we are his kids.

⁸ If anyone does not love other Christians, that shows that they don't know God at all. God is the one that helps us love other people, and he properly loves people all the time.

⁹ This is how God showed us that he loves us. He sent his only son to the earth, to give us new life, so that we can live for ever with God.

¹⁰ Think about the way that God loved us. He sent his son to take away all the bad things that we did, so that now he can say we are not guilty. That's real love. We didn't ever love God that way.

¹¹ Yes, my friends, God properly loves us, so we have to love each other too.

¹² You know, nobody ever saw God. But if we love each other, that shows that God is joined up with us, and his love is truly in us.*

We are joined up with God

* **4:12** John 1:18

¹³ We can be sure that we are joined up with God, and he is joined up with us, because God put his spirit in us.

¹⁴ And we know that God sent his son to save us people here on earth. Yes, we saw Jesus, we saw him with our own eyes, and now we are telling everybody the true story about him.

¹⁵ If anybody believes that Jesus is God's son, and if they tell people that true story, then God is joined up with that person, and they are joined up with God.

¹⁶ That's right. We know that God loves us very much, so we trust him. God properly loves people all the time. If anybody loves God and loves other people, then they are joined up with God, and God is joined up with them.

¹⁷ We are joined up with God, and we have God's love in us. We are like Jesus in this world. So later, on the day when God will judge everybody, we will not be frightened, because we know that God will not punish us.

¹⁸ Yes, we know that we have God's love in us, so we don't have to be frightened of God at all. Some people are frightened that God will punish them. Those people don't properly understand God's love. God's amazing love means that we don't have to be frightened.

If we love God, we will love other Christians too

¹⁹ We didn't love God at first, but he loved us anyway. So now we love God, and we love other Christians.

²⁰ Maybe somebody will say, "I love God." But that person hates another Christian. Well, that

person is lying. Think about it. It's easier to love somebody if you can see them. But it's harder to love somebody that you can't see. Well, we can see other Christians, but we can't see God. So if somebody doesn't love other Christians, then we know for sure that they don't love God.

²¹ But you know what God told us to do. He said that if we love him, we have to love other Christians too.

5

God's kids have to love each other

¹ You know that Jesus is the Christ, the special man that God sent to save us. If anyone believes that about Jesus, it shows that God is their father, and they are one of God's kids.

You know, all of us that are God's kids, we love God. And if we love God, then we will love other Christians, because they are God's kids too.

² Do you want to be sure that you love other Christians? Well, keep on loving God and doing what he says. That's the way to love other Christians.

If we love God, we will live his way

³ If we love God, then we will live his way and do the things that he tells us to do. And you know, it is not hard for us to live God's way.*

⁴ You see, we are God's kids, and he makes us strong, so that we can live his way. The people that belong to this world, they don't live God's way. They live the world's way, and they do bad

* 5:3 John 14:15

things. But God helps us say *no* to doing those bad things. It's like we won against the world. Do you know how we won against the world? We did it by believing in Jesus.

⁵ That's right. There is only one sort of person that can win against the world. It's the person that believes that Jesus is God's son.

We know the true story about Jesus Christ

⁶ This is the true story about Jesus Christ, God's son. He came to this earth, and he got baptised with water. Later on, he died, and his blood came out. Yes, Jesus Christ got baptised, but he also died. God's spirit tells us that story is true. And everything God's spirit says is right.

⁷ So these three things all tell us that Jesus is God's son.

⁸ That water that Jesus got baptised with, it tells us about Jesus. And his blood that came out when he died, it tells us about Jesus. And the Holy Spirit, he tells us about Jesus. It's like the Holy Spirit, and the water, and the blood, they all agree with each other.

⁹ You know, if people tell us a story about something that happened, we believe them. Well, we can trust God even more than we trust people. God always tells the true story. So we have to believe the story that God told us about his son.

¹⁰ Everyone that believes that Jesus is God's son, they properly trust all the things that God said about Jesus. Yes, God said that Jesus is his son. If anyone doesn't believe that story, it's like they are calling God a liar.

¹¹ This is the story that God told us. He told us that he sent Jesus to give us new life, so that we can live for ever with God.*

¹² Everyone that is joined up with Jesus, they have new life, and they will live for ever with God. But if anyone is not joined up with Jesus, then they do not have new life, and they can't live for ever with God.

¹³ I know that you mob all believe in God's son Jesus. So you all have new life from God, and you will live with God for ever. I want you to be really sure about that, and that's the reason why I'm writing this letter to you.

God listens to us when we pray

¹⁴ We can be sure that God listens to us when we pray to him. Yes, if we think about the things God wants, and the good things that he promises, and if we ask God for those good things, then God will listen to us.

¹⁵ So whenever we pray to God, we know that God will listen to us, and he will do the things we ask.

We have to pray for Christians that do bad things

¹⁶ If you see another Christian doing the wrong thing, you have to pray for them, and then God will give them life. You know, some people do things that stop them being joined up with God. One day, those people will die for ever. I'm not saying you have to pray for those people. But you have to pray for Christians that do other bad things.

* 5:11 John 3:36

¹⁷ Every time somebody does a bad thing, they are going against God. But not all those bad things make a person die for ever.

We know that we belong to God

¹⁸ All us mob that are God's kids, we know that we don't keep on doing bad things all the time. God's son Jesus helps us stay strong. The devil, that boss over the bad spirits, he always wants to make us do bad things. But Jesus keeps us safe, so the devil can't make us go wrong.

¹⁹ We know that we belong to God. But the devil has power over everyone else in the world.

²⁰ We know this too. God's son Jesus came to this earth, and he showed us what God is like. So now we properly know the only true God. We are joined up with God, because we are joined up with his son Jesus Christ. He is properly God, and he gives us new life, so that we will live for ever with him.

²¹ My Christian friends, don't follow any other gods, and don't let anything else be the boss over your life.

Plain English Version
Portions of the Holy Bible in the Plain English
Version translation for Australian Aboriginal people
who speak English as a second language

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