

OVERCOME!

with I John

'Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God'



Handouts to help you read & understand –
for personal Bible study, reading the Gospel with a friend or with a group

1st Session **THEME: What we mean by fellowship**

Introduction

The upcoming time you will read a wonderful letter: I John. Maybe you do this together with your Life Group. These handouts are made to help you study the letter. And to be blessed in reading, understanding and believing what God says in this letter to you. To prepare yourself, you may start to read the letter once, or several times. Ask yourself questions like: what problem does this letter address? What is its main message? Which topics do frequently come back? And of course: how does that relate to me, to us now?

1. Start with prayer. Then look at this icebreaker question. 10 minutes to get started

Sometimes we are hurt by people of whom we would not have expected it. Sometimes even by those of our own fellowship, the church. And we are left behind with the pain and disappointment. Have you experienced this in the past (or recently)? If you were able to overcome and go on – what has helped you? (Avoid that you end up talking the rest of your LG about this – it is just to get into the topic!).

2. Introduction to I John 5 minutes

Today we start to read the first of John's letters. The author is the same as the author of the Gospel. Once you begin to read the letter, you will observe the similarities in thought and language. John writes his letter to a church that faces a lot of pain and disappointment. A group has left them (see Ch. 2:19). Probably after a lot of quarrels. The true Christians in the church were not treated very kindly by the people of this group. When the true Christians wanted to talk about sin, forgiveness, holiness, commandments – the others were not happy. Maybe they had been attracted by all the benefits that Christianity seemed to promise: freedom, being loved, a form of equality, and so on. Maybe they started a new church. Maybe they looked at themselves as the overcomers; and at the ones who left behind as the losers. How disappointing must this all have been. But now, they receive a very comforting, encouraging and helpful letter. With it, they can overcome. And understand what has happened. And discern, between true and fake Christianity and fellowship. A great letter, that we may also read, and be helped and blessed and equipped while reading it!

3. Read two or three times: I John 1:1-4 20 – 25 minutes to answer these questions

Letters, books and passages contain topics and messages. A message is what it says about the topic. And letters, books and passages are written because the readers needed the message on this topic (to help them with a problem they struggled with). So, there is also a purpose. Now let's try to look at each of these!

- Given the situation (see introduction), about which topic does John begin to write? – so: what is the main topic of these 4 verses?
- John doesn't start by mentioning their problems, but by mentioning his topic. Why does he do that? And what can we learn from that?
- What is the message that John gives about this topic?
- Which purpose does he have with giving this message, about this topic, in this situation? (Where do you see that in the text?)

4. Apply and end with prayer.

- Think again of the icebreaker question. And look again at the passage. Take some moments of silence. What did the Lord tell you today; what did you learn? Briefly share. Then pray; bring in prayer what has been mentioned.

Digging deeper (information to read before or after the meeting)

Compare 1 John 1:1-14 with John 1:1-18. Do you see the similarities? Which do you see?