

1 John: Trust and Obey

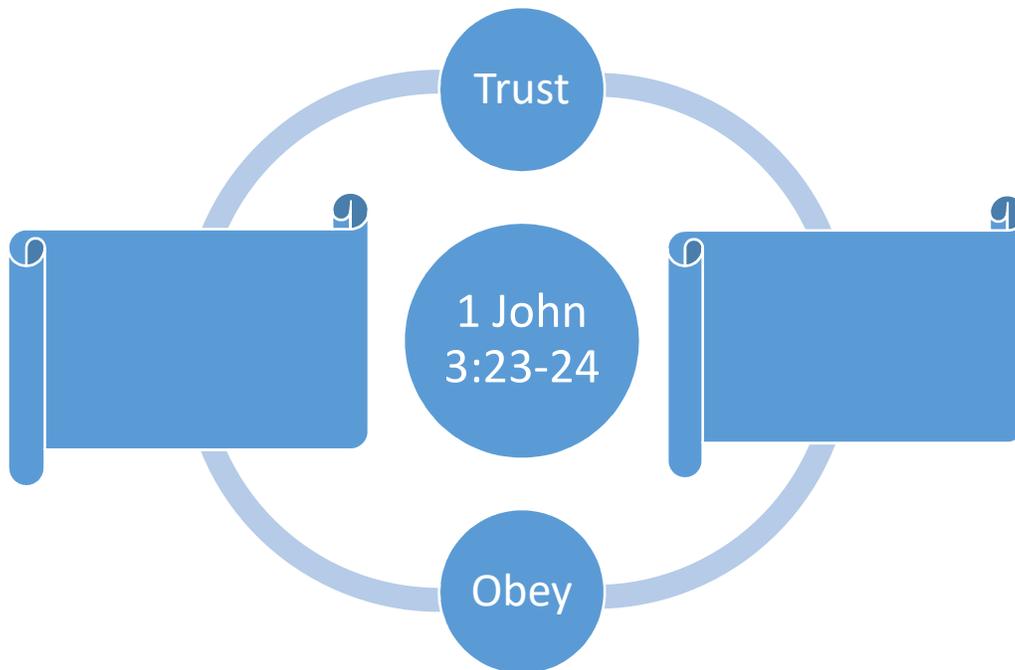
Discussion Guide

First John is the next book we are doing in a different way, looking at the theme of the book so you can create an anchor for your own further study. We will spend some time talking about the major themes and encourage you to go deeper in your personal time with the Word.

We are really excited to hear about how God teaches you while you do that, so please comment on the website under this Bible Study. Share with the community what God is teaching you in 1 John.

1 John is different than the other books we have looked at because it is written in a circular style. For some of us this can be jarring, because most of contemporary writing is linear. Many books of the bible are written that way also. Linear writing has a beginning middle and end. Typically the writer introduces a theme, expands on the theme and draws a conclusion at the end. The word linear indicates the writing follows a straight line.

In circular writing the author will come back to the theme again and again. Making a point and bringing it back to the theme, as if going in a circle. I think one of the best ways to process this book is through a diagram:



Let's fill this diagram in as we go along together. As we read together, I think we will find John leading us to the idea that trust brings about obedience and vice versa.

Let's start with the first chapter, where John proclaims the Gospel. Read 1 John 1:5-9

Rephrase John's message here:

On which side of the trust/obey diagram would you put that passage? Fill it in on the diagram.

Let's look at chapter 2. Read 1 John 2:1-6. Do you see the circular nature of the trust/obey theme? Break it down here:

Put the 1 John 2:1-6 passage on the diagram.

The next verses of chapter two talk about light and dark again, living in a different way than the world, and warning about antichrists (which are any who come against the message of Christ). You can make notes on the trust and obey theme as you see fit in the remainder of chapter two. Specifically please assign the following to your diagram:

1 John 2:24

1 John 2:28-29

Let's look at chapter three, which contains the verse I believe is centrally thematic. Read 1 John 3:23-24. Rephrase these two verses then place the passage on the diagram. (If necessary you can separate the two verses):

Before we leave chapter three, let's diagram 1 John 3:18.

Please read 1 John 4:4. Rephrase it here, then diagram it.

Read 1 John 4:11. Where would you put that on the diagram?

From chapter 5, please read and diagram the following passages:

1 John 5:13-14

1 John 5:16

1 John 5:20-21

Would you say that John is showing the relationship between trust and obedience? Can you give any examples that help you make this more relevant in or from your own life?

Trust and Obey. Do you struggle with one of these more than the other? Which and why?

Does John's circular connection between trust and obedience help you to link them more closely together going forward?

Can you share any tips or tools that help you stay inside the trust and obey circle?
