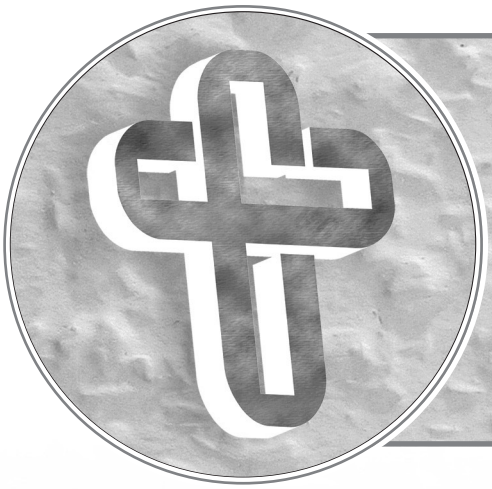


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 06 2026

love power

Scripture Story: 1 John 1:5-10; 1 John 4:7-16; 2 John 1:7-11.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 53-55.
Key Text: 1 John 3:1, 2.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

We see John's temperament on display when he encouraged Jesus to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who withheld their hospitality from the Savior (Luke 9:54, 55). He was hotheaded indeed, but that defect was perhaps matched by his intense ambition. We see his thirst for prestige when he and James enlisted the aid of their mother to help them gain prominent spots in the kingdom, causing a near meltdown among the other disciples (Matthew 20). John was at best an unfinished project.

In spite of his "issues" John made it a point to hang close to Jesus. The youngest of the disciples, he was impressionable and teachable, willing to be led by a Man whose unconditional love and patience with him simply knocked his socks off. As his three Epistles testify, John had experienced the transforming love of Jesus, and this love became the rule of his life. There is no better exposition on the love of God expressed through Jesus than that found in the book of 1 John.

The core message to be communicated this week is that time spent with Jesus, time spent in the presence of God, is not wasted time. The love of Jesus purifies the character, ennobles the mind, and prepares one to communicate the love of God to others. Jesus can remove the evil traits of character in us and fit us for His service, but none of this can happen in a life that is too busy to know God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that the love of God has the power to transform their lives into the image of Jesus Christ. *(Know)*
- Accept the love of God as the principal rule by which they live. *(Feel)*
- Share the love of God with others that they, too, might come to know God. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Father, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 3

"God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father" (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Psychologist and author Dr. Ellen McGrath wrote the following in a *Psychology Today* article entitled

"The Power of Love": "Love is as critical for your mind and body as oxygen. It's not negotiable. The more connected you are, the healthier you will be both physically and emotionally. The less connected you are, the more you are at risk."

McGrath goes on to note that the love she's speaking about in her piece is not the "love" glamorized in our increasingly entertainment-oriented culture. The *What Do You Think?* activity is designed to explore some of the misconceptions about love that we unknowingly harbor.

According to the apostle John, love is a Person, love is God (1 John 4:8). God's love is the only love that positively changes one's character.

Answers to the True/False quiz: T, F, F, T, F, T, F, T

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"Charlotte Elliott was an unusually gifted young woman, an outstanding portrait artist and a writer of humorous essays. She seemed to have everything going for her. While she was still in her early 30s, she suffered a debilitating illness that left her sickly and depressed. A godly preacher named Caesar Malan visited her. Pastor Malan asked Charlotte if she had peace with God. The question distressed her. She became upset and refused to discuss it.

"As she thought about her lack of courtesy and respect for this noted man of God, she felt a tinge of sorrow. In a few days she approached him to apologize. She said she wanted to become a Christian but needed to clean up a few things in her life first. The pastor simply looked her in the eyes and said, 'Come as you are.' Charlotte surrendered her life to Christ. . . . Fourteen years later she remembered the words spoken to her by the one who had led her to Christ and composed the hymn 'Just as I Am,' which has led so many millions to Christ.

"There is no other way to come to Jesus than 'just as we are.' There is no other place to begin than just where we are. And there is no better time than now" (Mark Finley, *Solid Ground,* p. 279).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

In a culture obsessed with outward appearance is it any wonder that teenagers are looking for surgical fixes to anything amiss in the mirror? Our society seems blissfully unconcerned about the interior life of individuals, about what truly makes us who we are. Yet this is the chief concern of God. God is into extreme makeovers, but He tends to work from the inside out. This is the message we get from the life of the apostle John. True and lasting transformation can come only from the love of God, and He alone is qualified to perform the operation.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- **God Is Light.** The concept of God as light may not be new to your students, but its implications will be. Because God is light, He seeks to reveal Himself to us in His perfect holiness and majesty. Light always reveals, and this is the core objective of God in sending His sinless Son to save humanity. Because John and the other disciples experienced God in all His fullness through Jesus Christ, they were transformed. Consequently, if we claim to be followers of God, then we must walk in the light, and doing so will transform us! This is the sanctifying experience that John had as he learned at the feet of Jesus. Remember, the man writing these things was once a very unloving person.
- **God Is Love, So We Must Love**. First John 4:7-16 is perhaps the best definition of love and the demands that it makes in the lives of God's people. Notice how John implores us to love each other. Notice how he links one's ability to love to one's connection with God. No God, no capacity to love. Explore with your students this link between God—who is love—and our ability to love others. The ability to love is a test of whether or not we are born of God.
- **Truth Matters.** The Ephesian church during the time of John was beset by false teachers, hence this admonition on which religious teachers should be welcomed into one's home. John knew firsthand the power of the truth—he lived in close proximity to the Way, Truth, and Life. He had little tolerance for false teachers who rejected Jesus. In a time when people are willing to whitewash truth to "get along" with oth-

ers, what are the implications of this message? Wouldn't John be labeled a hatemonger today?

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Romans 6; John 15:1-8; Matthew 6:43-48; John 17:3.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. The Letters in Brief. The three Epistles of John are difficult to cover in a single lesson. First John, for instance, stresses the themes of love, light, knowledge, and life as it warns against the dangers of heresy. In each case, John recognizes God as the source of all of these noble gifts, and he does so in an effort to assure the Ephesian believers of eternal life through Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-4).

Second John is concerned with how Christian truth relates to hospitality—specifically, which religious teachers should be invited to dwell in a home and which should not. At the time, certain religious teachers were using the hospitality of church members to spread heresy. Confused believers at Ephesus needed to know how to deal with these itinerant heretics, since in the culture of the day hospitality to friends and strangers was expected.

Third John encourages the Ephesian believers to extend their hospitality to genuine teachers of truth. This letter focuses on the behavior of one Diotrephes, who refused to abide by John's counsel and also refused to welcome traveling missionaries into his home.

2. Love on Life Support. As we read the Epistles of John, we must ask ourselves why the apostle chose love to be the overarching theme of his letters. Could

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Making It Stick

Making truth stick in the hearts and minds of students is a constant challenge. Have you ever noticed that you can remember music that touched you eons ago, but not the pastor's sermon from last week? Truth set to music is often more powerful than the spoken word. Music has the capacity to engage the heart and mind at a deep level, and its message is almost impossible to resist. Perhaps this is why God told Moses to compose a special song for the Israelites to learn as they prepared to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 31). Perhaps this is why so much of King David's interactions with God are set to music.

Is there a song that embodies a truth in this lesson that would help that truth "stick" with your students? Why not find a meaningful song and share it with the students? Be sure to explain why you're sharing the song and the special significance of its message.

RABBI 101

cornerstoneconnections

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Acts of the Apostles. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

there have been an absence of love? Here's what Ellen White noted about a change that took place in the church in the years following Pentecost.

"After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts. . . .

"But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 547, 548).

3. The Write Time. Many scholars believe that John wrote his letters sometime between the late A.D. 80s and early 90s. In the mid A.D. 90s, John and many other believers began to suffer persecution under the reign of the emperor Domitian.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask one of the students to read 1 John 3:1-3. Ask them to reread the last verse again: "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3, NKJV).

The word "pure" mentioned in verse three comes from the Greek word *hagnos*. This word describes a person who is clean, modest, undefiled, morally faultless, and without blemish. It describes Jesus Christ.

Ask your teens to close their eyes. Speak in their hearing the adjectives and attributes that describe Jesus: "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," "Rose of Sharon," "Good Shepherd," "Hidden Treasure," "Precious Pearl," "the Alpha and the Omega," "Lamb of God," "the Messiah," "our Savior," "our High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate," "King of kings and Lord of lords," "the Bright and Morning Star." Then ask each student to think of one thing in their life that is getting in the way of their relationship with Christ, preventing God from transforming them.

Ask a student to pray, asking God to give each class member the power and willingness to surrender all to Him.

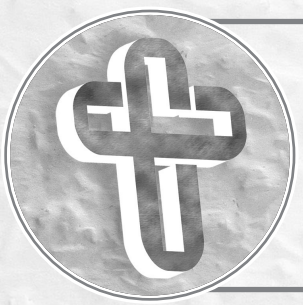
Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The apostle John spent a relatively short amount of time with Jesus, but that brief period of time changed his life. We know that Jesus saw something special in John because he was the disciple to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother (John 19:26, 27). Would Jesus have given His mother to an ambitious hothead? Probably not.

John was by no means perfect, even after time spent with Jesus, but he continued in the faith, carefully obeying the teachings of Jesus and surrendering himself to the working of the Holy Spirit in his life. The result was a stalwart exponent of the gospel who worked tirelessly to build up the fledgling Christian church at Ephesus.

John's Epistles show us a believer who understands the practical, life-changing power of God's love. He dares us to fall into the clutches of God's love rather than continue to sin (1 John 3:4-9). He challenges us to tolerate no substitutes to Jesus Christ, no false teaching or false teachers (2 John). He commends all who stand firm for right in the face of the powerful (3 John).



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 53-55.

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

JUNE062026

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 John 1:5-10; 1 John 4:7-16; 2 John 1:7-11.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 53-55.

love power

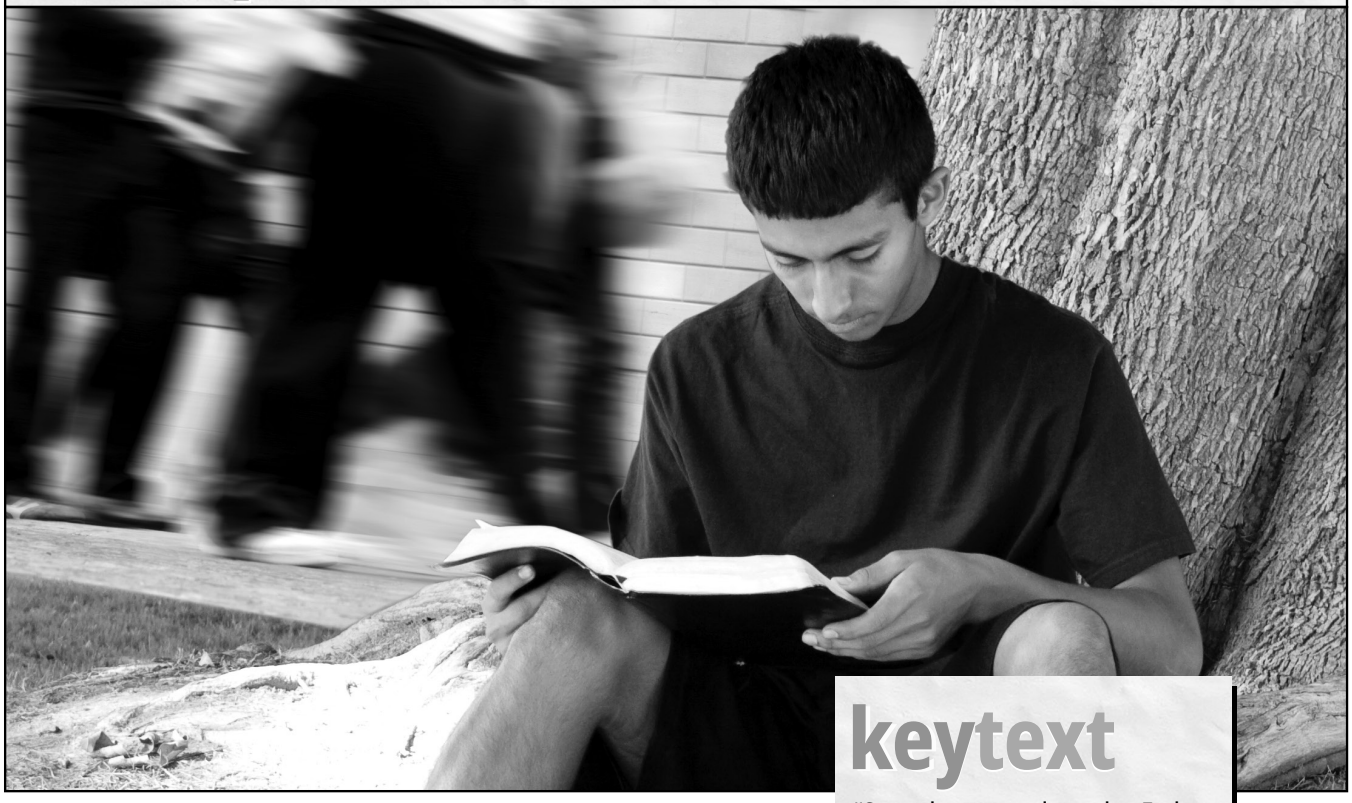


Photo by Terrill Thomas

keytext

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! . . . Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

(1 John 3:1, 2, NIV)

flashlight

"In the life of the disciple John true sanctification is exemplified. During the years of his close association with Christ, he was often warned and cautioned by the Saviour; and these reproofs he accepted. As the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, John saw his own deficiencies, and was humbled by the revelation. Day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. Day by day his heart was drawn out to Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 557).

what do you think?

Write T (True) or F (False) by the statements below with which you agree or disagree.

___ Love is as important to your mind and body as oxygen.
___ True love happens when someone "sweeps you off your feet."
___ Most people learn about the true meaning of love from reading the Bible.
___ Love is a Person.
___ Love and truth are two separate things.
___ You cannot love God and the world at the same time.
___ Love is a feeling.
___ True love changes you.

did you know?

It was John's deep love for Christ which led him always to desire to be close by His side. The Savior loved all the Twelve, but John's was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child's confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Savior's deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to the people."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 545.

INTO THE STORY

God Is Light

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us."

God Is Love, So We Must Love

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

"This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

God Is Truth

"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work."

(1 John 1:5-10; 1 John 4:7-16; 2 John 7-11, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Circle the parts of the Scripture story that are new to you, the concepts you've never heard before.

Place a check mark by what you think is the most important point in each section of the Scripture story.

Why do you think John begins his letter by describing God as "light"? Why does he state that there is no darkness in God?

What points does John make about sin?

According to John, how do we show that we love God? How does God show His love for us?

Why is it important that people who profess to believe in God "continue" in the truth?

punch lines

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" **(Galatians 5:6, NIV).**

"Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life" **(Jude 21, NIV).**

"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them" **(Ephesians 5:11, NIV).**

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" **(John 1:14, NIV).**

"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock" **(Acts 20:29, NIV).**

further insight

"There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 559

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 1 John 4:16 and 2 Corinthians 5:14.

Take a moment to complete the *What Do You Think?* activity. Discuss your answers with the class once everyone finishes. Love is one of the most misunderstood concepts in our world. We know it when we see it, but how do we learn to love? Well, John more than any other disciple, tried to make clear the true meaning of love and its power to transform us.

Read 1 John 4:16. According to John, is love someone or something?

_____

Based on John's conclusion about the source of love, can one achieve true love without a relationship with God? Explain your answer.

_____

What special power does God's love possess? (2 Corinthians 5:14).

_____

Sunday

Read Luke 9:49.

Read the *Into the Story* section of this week's lesson, and answer the *Out of the Story* questions. Earlier in chapter 1 of John's first letter, he declares that God is "light." Light allows us to see things. It dispels and repels physical and spiritual darkness.

Read Luke 9:49. What "darkness" do you see in John's character?

_____

This week's Scripture story was written by John after he had spent much time with Jesus, after the Holy Spirit had helped him overcome much of the darkness in his character. What dark areas of your life need God's light?

_____

Monday

Read 1 John 3:1, 2.

This week's *Key Text* contains one of the most powerful truths in all of Scripture.

Think for a moment. What things might block us from experiencing the joy of being saved, from knowing that we are *now* God's children?

_____

Read Isaiah 59:2. Sin breaks our intimacy with God. We feel far away from God. Does God abandon us (1 John 1:9)? While God still loves us, what danger is there in continuing to commit known sin (1 Timothy 4:1, 2)?

_____

Tuesday

Read 1 John 1:1-4.

This week's *Flashlight* quotation is one of the best descriptions of how a close love relationship with Jesus Christ transforms a person. John loved Jesus. He wasn't perfect when he followed Jesus, but each day spent in Jesus' presence slowly transformed John.

Read 1 John 1:1-4 to get a picture of how John describes the Jesus whom He shared with others. Write down the descriptive words that John uses to prove that he knew Jesus.

_____

John physically walked, talked, and lived with Jesus. Since Jesus isn't here physically, how can we get to "know" Him the way that John did? Read John 16:12-15.

_____

Wednesday

Which of the *Punch Lines* speak to you, catch your attention?

During John's time, some false teachers claimed that Jesus was not the Son of God. They taught that since all matter was evil—the human body included—God would never permit His perfect sinless nature to be mixed with sinful human flesh.

Why do you think this doctrine was dangerous? What happens to humanity if Jesus' sinless life, death, and resurrection are wiped away?

_____

What did John call people who dismiss Jesus' existence and sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:22, 23)? Are those people still around today? Explain.

_____

Thursday

Read 1 John 3:13-18.

According to John, how do we know that we have crossed over from death to sin to being alive in Christ?

_____

List one way that you can show each of the people below that you love them.

1. Your parents: _____
2. A senior citizen at your church: _____
3. Someone at your school who gets picked on a lot: _____

Friday

Read John 17:3.

John the Beloved wrote this about knowing God: "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3, NIV).

Take a moment to reflect on these two questions: Do you know God? Does God know you?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 53-55.

**Unlikely Leaders* is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.