



WIVA!

1 JOHN

WEEK FOUR:  
**CONFIDENCE**

## HOW TO USE

We wrote this curriculum for those times when life is busy and you might be looking for a little help and inspiration as you plan for time with your students. Everything you need to know for each week's curriculum is laid out below. That being said, the best results will come from spending some time with the curriculum in advance—make sure, in particular, to read the “Teacher Prep” section.

Each of these lessons can be led in different ways. Please be sensitive to your group. You might have a group that really wants to dig into an idea, or you might have a group that just needs to hear the basic truth. You get to decide that as you meet.

Finally, please feel free to discard any of this content to stay in your group's context. The best curriculum for your group is you, caring for them as they get to know God.

Have ideas about this curriculum? Be part of the revolution and give us some feedback at <http://help.theyouthcartel.com/hc/communities/public/topics/200121073-Viva>

## WHO WROTE THIS

Brad Hauge is a Northwest boy through and through who can't shake his boyhood love of Pearl Jam or the Mariners. He really likes Jesus and really likes students. And he really likes helping students realize they can totally be a part of what Jesus is up to in our world. He gets to do that for a living in Spokane, WA, where he work as the Director of High School Ministries at First Presbyterian Church.

## THE REST

Sarah Hauge is a youth ministry veteran who works as a writer and editor in Spokane, WA.

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3Objectivew

# OBJECTIVE

Throughout his letter, one of John's key points is that when we abide in Christ's light and love, we can lead a confident life. Despite times when we may have to deal, as John writes, with the hate of others, false things said about Jesus, or even the temptations of our world, ultimately we can still be confident because of Christ's saving grace. In this lesson, we will look at how allowing ourselves to abide with God, full of light and love, also allows us to claim a lasting and deep confidence in who we are as Christ's followers.

# TEACHER PREP

- An internet connection and the ability to play a YouTube video with sound for your group.
- Enough Bibles for everyone (or at least close). If you have time before your meeting, encourage the students to bring their Bible with them.
- Print and cut out the group discussion prompts included at the end of this lesson.
- Spend some time reading, and becoming familiar with, 1 John 2:1-6, 1 John 3:11-14, 1 John 4:11-19, and 1 John 5:1-3.

# OPENING ACTIVITY

## "TOP 100 SUCCESSFUL YOUTUBE STUNTS"

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

I'm sure you've all seen hundreds of YouTube videos and TV clips of people failing spectacularly at various tricks and stunts. The amount of those "fail" videos made us wonder if there was anything that showed the successful versions of stunts. There was—and it's rad. Check it out:

**Note:** You may find the music on this video slightly annoying (I did!). It's not inappropriate, just a bit lame. Feel free to play another song while the video plays if you'd like.

Show your group this YouTube clip: <http://youtu.be/EncL-qEwUe4>

# DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Depending on the size of your group you may want to have them turn to a couple of neighbors to create small discussion groups, or just have the discussion as a large group.)

- What, in your opinion, was the most impressive stunt you just saw completed?

- Think of at least three of these things that you'd never, ever, ever try to do. What are they?
- Do you have any skills, secret or otherwise, that could place you in that video?
- Do you think those in the video were born with that sort of confidence or did they have to practice?

## MAIN LESSON

### SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Here's the thing about the people attempting the stunts in that video. They have to have an incredible amount of confidence that they'll be okay. They have to truly believe that when they try these things, the odds are so much in their favor that risking their life and limb is worth the payoff.

There might not be a ton of stuff I feel comfortable declaring to you all with 100% authority, but this one I feel pretty good about: John, and the people of Jesus' time, didn't need confidence to pull off insane bike jumps, or flips off of trampolines, or even trick basketball shots. Mainly I can say this with confidence because none of those things existed when they walked the earth. Wah-wah.

However, they dealt with some pretty serious adversity in their communities simply for choosing to follow the ways of Jesus. The concept of confidence was not a foreign one to them, and John tells followers of Jesus throughout 1 John that we have plenty of reasons to have confidence in Christ. He writes that the odds are in our favor, that the payoff is worth it.

We've already looked at how John writes of God being light and love and how abiding with him leads to more light and even more love. And today we want to wrap up our time in 1 John by looking at how John ties that all together by calling followers of Jesus to have confidence in those things—even if it seems like the payoff might not be there.

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

**Split your group up into four different groups.** (Or if that would leave the groups too large, you can have eight groups, or twelve, etc.) Assign each of the four groups a different passage. Invite one person in the group to read the entire text, or you may want to have students take turns with verses and sections.

1. 1 John 2:1-6
2. 1 John 3:11-14
3. 1 John 4:11-19
4. 1 John 5:1-3

**Hand out the discussion prompts** for each section to the appropriate groups and give them plenty of time to explore their section of scripture.

*Once they have all had a chance to discuss the text, give them a chance to share with the larger group a few of their lingering questions and a few of their most insightful thoughts. Once each group has had a chance to share, then...*

## SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

Let's make sure to spend some time focusing on a couple of key points from these sections. The first is that John seems to firmly believe that if we fill up our lives with Jesus, there won't be much room left for us to worry about how much we are falling short of who God created us to be. Take a look at verses 16-17 from chapter 4: "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. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus."

We have to know and rely on the fact that we are loved by God. The more we abide in that truth, the more we experience the light and love that lead to true life. If we are, as John says, "living in God," then we truly don't have much to worry about. John lets us know clearly that if we are spending our time being like Jesus to the world around us, there really isn't any part of our life we shouldn't have confidence in.

The other thing I want us to end with was that bit from chapter five. Most of us have an immediate desire to push back when we hear the word "commandments," or "commands." We don't want to follow commands or be forcefully told what to do. It can make us think of authority figures lording over us, making us do something we don't really want to.

And I get that—"command" is a heavy word. But I don't think John is trying to make us run laps or belittle us into guiltily following Jesus. Let me read verse 3: "In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."

Think back to everything John has written. God is light. God is love. Perfect love drives out fear. We are to love God and love each other. Rest in God's presence and abide there. Remain in his light so we can love better. These commands are not scary. These commands are not burdensome.

We can have confidence that God is not asking us to do something where the odds are not in our favor. He isn't asking us to jump off a 100 foot tall building and land on a skateboard- but he is asking us to obey his commands. And the wonderful thing about that, is that his commands are not burdensome.

May you have confidence in a God who is light and love. May you have confidence that although we sin, we have a savior who forgives. May you have confidence that you are not alone, even in a world that doesn't seem to understand his commands. May you have confidence that you are loved and worthy of love, and may you have confidence that the more you abide in God, the more his light and love will grow in you and through you. And that just isn't burdensome.

## RESPONSE

Invite your students to form smaller groups that are *different* than their Bible Exploration groups (or if you have small groups that regularly meet, use those!) and work through these prompts:

- Who in your life gives you the most commands? Is this generally a positive or negative thing?
- What was the most interesting thing you talked about in your Bible Exploration group?
- How likely does it seem that someone could lead a life so full of love that there's little room left for sin or other things that keep you from God?
- Is there a part of your faith that feels insecure, that needs more confidence?
- What about faith feels most burdensome for you? Would you let someone in your group pray for you right now?

**End your time together in prayer—whether prayer requests, prayer partners, or just a general prayer thanking God for the ways in which we can know truths about him and about ourselves.**

## **1. 1 John 2:1-6**

- In general, what about this section do you resonate with? Is there anything you don't understand?
- How would you define sin?
- How might verses 1-2 relate to verses 3-6?
- What might the people John was writing to have been dealing with in terms of lack of confidence in this section? How is John providing reasons for followers of Jesus to have confidence in this section?

## **2. 1 John 3:11-16**

- In general, what about this section do you resonate with? Is there anything you don't understand?
- If you'd like a Cain & Abel refresher you can find the story in Genesis 4:1-8.
- Why would the world hate people who are trying to love each other?
- Read verse 16 again. When you hear that, do you mostly think about how you could lay your life down for a friend, or have you ever considered that a friend may do that for you?
- What might the people John was writing to have been dealing with in terms of lack of confidence in this section? How is John providing reasons for followers of Jesus to have confidence in this section?

## **3. 1 John 4:11-19**

- In general, what about this section do you resonate with? Is there anything you don't understand?
- Is it ever hard to feel like "no one has ever seen God?"
- What does John think we can do to show each other God?
- What does it mean for perfect love to drive out fear?
- What might the people John was writing to have been dealing with in terms of lack of confidence in this section? How is John providing reasons for followers of Jesus to have confidence in this section?

## **4. 1 John 5:1-3**

- In general, what about this section do you resonate with? Is there anything you don't understand?
- When you hear the word "commandment," what are the first things that pop into your head?
- Are those words more negative or positive?
- What might the people John was writing to have been dealing with in terms of lack of confidence in this section? How is John providing reasons for followers of Jesus to have confidence in this section?