Jason Williams ([00:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/141vD6YjQJ1P4--tOj-MRLXg8nfm1AB-iOotNY90hTHKyK5ZwGP58WupGCgFOuUZ9cBMH5pp2wFXybeDc3DOM8lZblU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.61)):

If you've been along for the Anchored Life Challenge ride, good news, you're almost there. We can see the finish line off in the distance. And if you've ever run a race, you know that as soon as that finish line comes into focus, it gives us the energy we need to get all the way there. And I just want to encourage you to finish strong, whether you're limping to the finish line or just starting to hit your stride.

([00:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/DcWnCDzZamCoGmb8Kf_XIqzWxbTHWAZjh4HsEtkWmsw0rbaJI87R0wODRzLeHySWc8d5bKo1dpLGLOEPqqXVtRy5KII?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=22.68)):

Either way, it's still possible to finish strong even if you stalled out somewhere along the way, I want to encourage you to pick it back up because this week we're going to be reading through some of the most hopeful and powerful words in all of the New Testament that I guarantee will be a gift and encouragement to you whether you've read none of the Anchored Life Challenge to date, some, or all of it. It's going to be a great week.

([00:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/54I7ODfFtjvFZVuuoD2AC9VKI0zgoEeaH-CkVPKm99TVq48AgFfbhjAs28wzlL8FC4kvBumWCdkWNHqWorsESLUTIMw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=45.63)):

Now, before we jump in and set up this next week's reading, I want to pause for just a second and say a big thank you to many of you who have helped make this life-changing experience possible. I want to ask you to do something that we almost never do, and that's this. If you host or hosting an Anchored Life Challenge book club, can I get you to just stand up for just a second? I promise it won't hurt a bit. Go ahead and stand up. If you're hosting a book club, Anchored Life Challenge book Club, would you stand? Let's give these guys a hand.

([01:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0FUia5-JYBk_n8wBIHQcCS_OOP409YzkjzEArD4Re2-Bpxg0C8F2dy_37bh9XmTJSvBoWW8RU7W4Gqk-xLLFBPEvFu4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=77.16)):

All of our campuses, if it weren't for you all, creating the space for the conversations that have led to the incredible, incredible stories that we've been hearing, encouraging us along the way as we read and fall behind and you tell us you can do it, and we catch back up praying for us throughout the journey, this transformational moment in the life of our church would not have been possible and we are truly, truly grateful. So thank you, thank you, thank you.

([01:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Ba_3NLha62uF0mJlMornIG_doL1THCnkk2QOlIQmMuPScQC388YRE45VfeoI2MryjLDgLbTcNVorvrwnzFseFzZx1OA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=105.42)):

Now, if this is your first time here with us and you're all of a sudden wondering, what have I walked in on and what is going on here," welcome. We're really glad that you're here today. And let me just catch you up. We are now in the final leg of a challenge that we accepted seven weeks ago in the midst of a year that we knew was probably going to be pretty crazy with global conflict, elections coming up, all that, by saying yes to doing something honestly semi-heroic, reading through the New Testament over the eight-week period of time as a way of anchoring our hearts and lives in God's life-giving and reassuring word, and it has been an incredible journey.

([02:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tJiahqlD0BF5IPdb1QVdHFzPW44Fqgq_F14xmUKyDeCNaV3aBFtTqLxXT9rJeY0oGqGX1YKI6ojo9rbjefJKFRgPKqY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=146.88)):

It's not quite over yet. Each week we've been looking ahead to the next week's reading, kind of pulling out some anchoring truths that we can apply in our lives. And this week we're going to be diving into the writings of John. This week we're going to be finishing up the Gospel of John, reading 1-3 John, and also reading through Revelation. Now, who was John? He was a part of Jesus's inner circle who knew him as well as anyone. And this week we're going to read and focus in on 1 John, an urgent and impassioned letter that he wrote to some friends of his that we'll see is as timely and as relevant to us today as it was back then to them.

([03:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gTyEXSTv28wK5no3k2TBASW9r5PEPQZqZNL3WtWcq7rNcd2ZqAGb6rq4lvBVDYBaNlRVDG8hUG0_bTo1s8IM8vWysWE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=192.18)):

So what exactly was so urgent? Well, John had caught word of there being these false teachers that had popped up in churches that had had a hand in planning that were peddling cheap imitations of the good news that he had spent a lifetime sharing and John wasn't about to let them get away with it. In fact, he calls them out in 1 John chapter four, verse one, he says, "Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world."

([03:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YEraZUSl67EZoX837zpPdwXgbasd4APcLqW2GHBrtiQRdNzQXOxjfiA2rlnN1xHFf0IROy5lx9oK9L9L4A_SzeI0FVA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=236.16)):

So it turns out that counterfeiting goes back a really long way and it's only grown since. This week I read that in 2023, it's estimated that there were over $3 trillion in counterfeit goods sold worldwide. Any guesses as to what the priciest item on the top 10 most counterfeited list is? Any guesses? I'm hearing murmurs? It's a Rolex watch. In fact, it's estimated that there are actually more counterfeit Bolex watches in circulation than there are real Rolexes. So it's no wonder that Rolex goes to great lengths to try to make sure that those who are looking for the genuine experience can tell the difference between their masterfully crafted timepieces and the not so masterfully crafted Bolexes of the world.

([04:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Dv3dJcJdCmlVy1isK1rGUR8hhbgBc53IIoMsCAK2KbqI7i-yLldrOaA9sByxsiQLgXDJt1dG5U4tTDxprYU5z77IXIk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=288.06)):

And one of the primary ways that they try to spare people from that sinking feeling two weeks later when the hands pop off and your wrist turns green and you realize you've got a Bolex, is by spelling out a series of tests that can help someone tell the real deal from the fake every time. And in this letter, John is doing the exact same thing, but with something far more valuable than a watch, even a Rolex. He clarifies what constitutes genuine faith and helps them spot the fakes that had popped up. And can I tell you? I don't think there was anyone more qualified to do so.

([05:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/k_u_s8vw6vTEPARNTs1lN2sq2n958hp9eZF-9HM1ONN4B7_Z5OsMfUvsKPUIaNAhtEjnl62uKBTKQc9b_SX4Wkg7mEw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=329.58)):

By all accounts, John was Jesus' best friend during his time here on earth. He had spent three years with him and knew what it was that made him laugh, what made him cry, what filled him with joy, and what grieved him to the core. They spent hours talking. He had heard probably hundreds of sermons that Jesus had preached. If anyone knew God's heart, the heart of Jesus, it was John. And he pretty much says that at the top of the letter in 1 John 1:1. He wrote to them, "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life."

([06:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3EZwsH023MNPIQdSoAS4sJOfIQBwP2plc0otKm5iPooETs3AgyugaR_OnHJZLPWJSl6_mHBm2J3z-Iqv4l0yUNESamc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=383.4)):

Now, as I read this, I can't help but picture John hunched over his table feverishly writing, the whole time thinking, "Come on guys, these noobs have no idea what they're talking about. They weren't there, but we were. And man, what we experienced, what we saw, what we heard was incredible and I don't want you to miss it." Now, before you dive in and start reading 1 John this week, let me just warn you, it can come across as a little bit scattered. In fact, you might be tempted to wonder if John was an unmedicated adult with ADHD. I don't know.

([07:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0UYQr5nUJn6XhQhmFi-Lpp-YJjhlHV7RJimanMjAxf-eWT4UXKNLPm1LBoZcHLExk_tHycaTtRAduwEv8ZsBo-PVrbc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=426)):

Maybe he was. No way of knowing, but my guess is the more likely explanation is he was so bothered by the division and the confusion that was ripping the Church apart, that he didn't waste any time trying to gather his thoughts. He just grabbed a pen, he grabbed paper, and he began quickly laying out three tests of authentic faith that would allow them to determine whether someone had had a genuine encounter with Jesus or whether it was a counterfeit experience that they were trying to pedal on the church. So three tests of authentic faith. The first test is the truth test. The truth test.

([07:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XKYlkXvHinNud8xVtCPKi63_2-ROsfteiWBy7AcVgvyDlyl7jsnto9cJtk0-wRZxTiqheXvY4ugz3FE9fwFt4_WVzII?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=468.03)):

We find the truth test in 1 John 2:22. John wrote, "And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ." In essence, he says, "Look, if you've actually met the guy, truly gotten to know him, there's no way you would conclude anything other than he is God's Son sent to take away our sins and to save us. And if there's anybody sharing any sort of other explanation, then just ignore them." Truth test.

([08:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/gYSx24burDKgdC_co91Moo8ADuE4zneF3MU8BGdlXBW44PeFwJSEBFEY8r1UEozq4tPzTbKrtPv0KJhIdW4LY2QUDpA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=497.94)):

Second test is the life test. 1 John 2:3. He says, "And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, 'I know God,' but doesn't obey his commandments, that person is a liar and not living in the truth." It's one thing John says to know the truth, but it's another to live it out, to trust his better way when his word and our perspectives collide. And both make up the faith equivalent of a certificate of authenticity, but that validation isn't complete without the third test that I want to focus most of our time on today, and that test is the love test.

([09:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YbCoYCzt1h1YRIWxugUyvjwDeuCUB-moczx471iyDo_cU3Iv0iMnfETjyviF8x0i2bu7GTLTBXZxLWDpYzrO2L6yanI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=546.21)):

1 John 4:7. He wrote, "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for he is love." He's not loving, he's love. This relational test was designed to combat this idea that spirituality was about gaining or possessing some mystical special knowledge that a few had but others didn't. And of course the false teachers said, "We've got it and you don't." And they were going so far as to throw people out that didn't agree with them, that weren't on board. And John's writing to say, "Hey guys, look, Rolex Christianity, it doesn't work that way." "Love," we'll hear him say, "Is the highest value of Christian community and the deepest expression of faith, not superior knowledge or impersonal spirituality."

([10:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/LSJPPZyC8einniz0n6HQYFKQ4bSMRmac7kPnPUE_eIsNvIh_GPKnGpexf4Ioo_w9SVmZeteydPbfDocBq0EWOLrufJM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=612.9)):

And we're going to look at that test in a little bit more detail. But before we do, I want to pause here for just a moment and acknowledge a couple cultural realities that make talking about love maybe just a little bit trickier than we first think. First off, I mean the word love itself, it's a little bit watered down and overused at times. We use the word love to talk about everything. Take me for example, I use the same word to describe my affection for my wife that I do chocolate chip cookies. And people who know me best and know how many I eat may question whether or not it's close, but it's not. I hit the wife jackpot. It's not the same thing, but I do use the same word.

([10:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qwqQ-n6bIJuxl8kf9MJwVo4xY8S6SIT_mx7EJ4baQsL1P5BgRJjU5meng7tNbBqMOKXsjTBXRSCU3ACynbTDKbfWhII?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=654.57)):

And I'm not alone, by the way. I did a quick search this week and I found some stickers that celebrate some of the things that we, quote, unquote, "Love." "I love clowns." I don't know anyone who's ever said that they must have a family member who's a clown. I think it says, "I love math." Last night we had a calculus teacher here who got really excited about it, but still kind of an odd thing to say that you love. Compost. Do you know what that is? "I love being mad on the internet." Now, this one I actually believe, I think, because you spend a few minutes online and you would think there are people who love being mad on the internet, but it does seem like a strange thing to attach the word love to.

([11:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vwJWHx16aG2q-IkUtPYfADA2bMy3_hOiPWXd6RQIsz8UsT47W89r3-iCrRY2VXBz6jNyV_-xhKyBhPVHc2kj_0V6_EQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=695.4)):

But I think the other reality that makes this a little bit trickier conversation than maybe at first would seem is that we all, for the most part, think that we know what love is. I mean, we can all think of a grouchy uncle or somebody like that that maybe we question it, but for the most part we see ourselves as loving people, especially if we're followers of Jesus. But it's important to note who John was writing this letter to, and we see it in 1 John 5:13. He says, "I've written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God."

([12:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ylqYzcyAKVvLYMkpLeiyYswuIYHnGwThAYtwPt8IcJ_YLJ7yfd0d7SOQopEdyq1y3yIV5JZfluqyM4rv2egZ3L7a2gY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=738.18)):

He was writing this to people who had crossed the line of faith and thought they understood his teaching. He was writing this to us. And yet still John saw a need to write, to clarify and to explain what genuine love looked like. And he didn't do so in casual fashion or as a footnote to the previous two tests that we looked at. He uses this Greek word, agape, 46 times in this relatively brief letter. And agape wasn't like, it's not an emotive or a casual love. It's the deepest, most devoted love that's mentioned in the Bible. It's the love used to describe God's overwhelming divine love for Jesus. And he first mentions it in chapter two. He comes back to it in chapter three, and in chapter four, he makes some really emphatic statements using this word, agape. Not just about love for God, but to describe our love for each other.

([13:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/pZkkdVRAbfS9pWn13ZRRRmHKJl71HMypDbaFqPhHuyR7TIR3wya_G9JYX7nkM7IPPM6gJsrVCozxymeHa1fZMwCdaVs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=798.51)):

So what was it they were missing? What was it that John so desperately wanted them, wanted us to know and to understand about how we relate to each other that determines whether or not we have a Rolex or a Bolex strapped to our wrist? Well, for starters, John makes it clear that authentic love, the kind that anchors us and the people around us, is active. In 1 John 3:16, he wrote, "We know what real love is because Jesus gave his life for us. So we also ought to give our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well, sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion, well, how can God's love being that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other. Let us show the truth by our actions."

([14:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Z2nFVUdKTiUOYjFXBwqXJmaStYvueIlO9m_33h2IWfzUJwZ98il-lN-qZPONvEMNbe-7ETIrfxjGMsTCfGw5uu3JkuQ?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=860.52)):

John wants to make it clear that assumed love isn't love at all. Love, we'll hear him say, isn't really love until it's expressed. It's not passive, it's not based on good intentions, it's engaged. And yet it's so easy for us to make the assumption that the people around us in our lives know how we feel, which is why using our words to convey our love is so incredibly important. It may seem like John is saying something different here, "Don't use your words to love each other." But I don't think that's what he's getting at because John would've known Proverbs 16:24. It's a great verse. "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."

([15:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0sY8zQa-F5R1Y9HV5VQYjnfdIjdu1lmsvRX64lCC6BMBMew8aH06iGpzVeQL6FCFi9mzvxlu4GLwdFWY3oSZX32EZ1o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=908.55)):

John knew full well what I think we all know deep down, that the words that we hear and the words that we say play an enormous role in loving and being loved. I remember a Sunday, several years ago, I was actually leaving that morning. I was going, I was actually speaking at church ironically, and I was late and I was trying to get out the door and I literally was at the back door, had my hand on the doorknob when I hear the pitter-patter of little feet running down the hall. And my then three-year-old daughter slid into view saying, "Daddy, daddy, wait." This is her at about that age.

([15:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2XcLtrnZhATVCSXXrr2en3KS_1DpPd9es4lFUka--iaO-iJRyZNCoyTr5XKPilSI5GkjYbkkOpI7rAZtsJRgwjDTmgk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=947.58)):

And I was about to tell her, "Look, I got to go. I'm running behind, I got to get to church." But before I could get those words out, she follows up, "Daddy, wait. Daddy, are you proud of me?" What do you do in that moment? I told her, "Not now, I got to get to church. I got to..." Of course not. I got down on one knee so I could look her in the eyes and I scooped her up in my arm and I proceeded to tell her not just that I was proud of her, but many of the reasons why. And she just smiled and beamed while I did.

([16:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/lGhlm6mSJyeY9giDBbKq4Yhl8EiZ5A78nQzPkmoIrGACYM9iTBm96KjbGJXSe6rXhvjqZMIekISPkwkUifdrJn1uLg4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=986.88)):

Now, I know what some of you're thinking. I can see it on your faces. "Geez, dad, if you just told her every now and then she wouldn't have had to ask." You at the campuses, you're probably asking the same question, but that's just it. I did, I promise. I would tell her that I loved her, that I was proud of her, and I would try to point out many of the things that I saw in her that I'm convinced make her beautiful on the inside and out. And that's what makes that interaction so telling to me and such a glimpse into our souls in the way that we're wired, because she and her innocence, she wasn't shy about asking for the thing that we all crave and on some level desperately need, reminders from those we love of the difference that we make, the good things about us, the handcrafted masterpieces that we were designed by God to be.

([17:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/XJ2po0C9fNFsBJ7lIhG7zRn28xaTrcy1DHMrqlJ-Q3Gj8lJJQlYLqTit-clvp_NL9y3z2VxQcU1_blbNQU1_gmZSuiU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1043.79)):

Throughout our lives, we will all have people, including ourselves by the way, who will tell us otherwise. And that's why using our words to convey our love and to share with people the great things that we see in them is so, so important. So if John's not saying, "Hey, don't use words to show love," well then, what is he doing? What's he saying? He's making an emphatic point to drive home something that he really wants them and us to understand. Those false teachers that we'd mentioned earlier, they had elevated the spiritual and diminished the physical aspects of life and faith. So to them, love was nothing more than a concept that never really left the realm of words, which now that I think about, it sounds a little bit like today, doesn't it? Lots of talk about love, but so often the seeds of love die as mere sentiment or sympathy.

([18:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/e7-k8vUZ3lBF3k9iKS69DcfScg8NAHQE4a8vYoQpOYaMX3mIWlnWZ9Ev2RSBKEGL220AS_I7SiHJUibHe8QvEaueVJk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1109.73)):

And John is going after that hollowed out love and he's saying, "Guys, listen to me. Genuine love is more than talk." And he calls on us to love in action as much or more than we do with our words. And I thought when I realized that, I'm like, "Okay, I wonder how I'm doing on this." So I grabbed my phone and I started just a note and I was like, "How have I shown love and action to the people in my life?" And I started a list cards I'd sent, things I'd done, gifts I'd given, time I'd spent. Things like that, predictable stuff. And as the list grew, I kind of started feeling pretty good about myself. I mean, it wasn't a huge list, but it wasn't inconsequential either.

([19:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Xf1k44pmqfYLvv5fhOpVdY2wkzrux21NxOtr5f7o4jqAg6q8uMgJrnY6-KF9Pyrh0ZX3-2RKebUBo1TUeXwNh_zKOUk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1154.97)):

But as I stood back from it, I noticed something. Everything on my list, most of it anyway, were things that I do on my schedule when it's convenient for me. And while it was all good and encouraging things, I just couldn't shake the thought that John was talking about something even more significant and describing and spelling out genuine love. And I realized as I studied these verses, these three verses that we just read, it finally hit me that authentic love John is saying it's willing to be interrupted. It's one thing to plan acts of love on our schedule. And just to be clear, we should do that. In fact, helpful hint, if you're in a dating relationship and you don't plan ways to show your love to your significant other, you'll be very single very fast.

([20:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kBVVwyRua5x6CgEIedi-3OlONmb28jvJLIw_1ftdF89fKIdIkVjolaj0fK-CIaGJI-vOToK9qmTR0F9kRn1KjCHleJ4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1211.25)):

But here John is using the ultimate interruption. Jesus is saying, "I'll go," and leaving his perfect home with God to come to our rescue and describing a scene that I'm guessing we've all seen play out in our lives on numerous occasions. Someone in our life, a friend, a family member, maybe a small group member, falls on hard times, clearly needs a hand up. And that's never convenient, is it? In fact, if you're like me, those moments seem to pop up at the most inopportune times. Not only do they not fit my schedule, oftentimes they don't fit my budget. And yet what John is saying here is it's often those moments more than the planned actions to show our love that are a window into our hearts and reflect the love that we have for others.

([21:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/d7R2NyTjVkG3QKOT01ezojoqjD9rJ9vZ__I3yz9nOAmOjHJMXbSnClSzRNXRsLB4zy6at2taNaX4Cy8ejesUdyhlzFk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1267.95)):

I know this family who was trying to figure out, "How do we cement this value in our life and into our rhythms, this value of loving in action?" And they came up with this motto that we do more than just offer to help. And I thought that was brilliant because, "Hey, let me know if you need any help." Safest offer on earth. No one says yes to that. And they just decided, "You know what? We're not going to wait around for people to ask. We're going to be alert. And when we see opportunities to love, we're going to take them whether they're scheduled or not."

([21:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/C_QAcSn4Uu9arBhweDH3D9xqlBe7IyZh4EWkd7PkzP6SkRcSheHu5F_p3I0TEEL5063b0E8qk2Q0dex74MWJ8zjZvWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1304.64)):

And a couple of weeks ago, I got to see that motto actually lived out. I had a big birthday. And guys, I had an awesome plan. It was going to be so awesome. We were going to go, our family was going to go back to my alma mater out in North Carolina and go to a basketball game. And that may not sound all that exciting, but I've got this good friend who has sweet tickets right on the wood at mid-court. They're nice. And I've been before with one kid or the other, but never with my wife, Joy, never all of us together. And I thought, "This is going to be so fun to experience this together as a family." Not just the game, but the fun things around town that I had always appreciated and enjoyed that I wanted them to experience along with me as part of this birthday weekend.

([22:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2hkBurot7m0Nd79DIAsVFYsmkrU9n4eQMq31CCA_xDBEEYAKjluKQSDJsYAmASAlJ8CuxiQGeVES8jw2MBt2fgz3jOs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1356.75)):

But the morning that we were supposed to leave, we woke up and our son, Carsten, woke up sick. 102.5 degree-fever sick. Confession, I had a weak moment. I thought long and hard about drugging him up and dragging him out the door. "Come on buddy, we got to go. We got a game to watch." But the poor guy, he looked as sick as he felt, and I knew deep down that the right answer was to leave him behind with mom. Somebody had to watch him, and it was my birthday. I couldn't just not go to this game. But can I tell you, I was so bummed my plan was unraveling, I really wanted to experience it with all of us. And we were all bummed, and it was an emotional goodbye that morning, but still went.

([23:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/IkPPGWW-eCmr2uK1ILXbP4F0qhWcoKmLojqcEF8QtIYRWk1qAhKe8kj7PJvBLr4dDqbTGDvJyc8GCfaPq1hjp9i3qG8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1417.83)):

But you know what? We had some friends who knew how excited we were about that trip and they were heartbroken for us as well. And every day for three days while we were gone, they brought Joy and Carsten, they stopped by our house and brought Joy and Carsten some of their favorite treats. And can I tell you, that meant more to us than they realized to some extent because they have one of the fullest calendars that I know, but I think they get what John was saying here, that genuine love, the kind that distinguishes the Rolex from the Bolex, it's often more than just action. It's sacrificial action. It's willing to be interrupted.

([24:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/G1JjUbCz0fugqCad55SPXoDoqzWAfdvgAwFeTE7SR9Cl4olH3H94TJV28cua69T3KM1ug9KbGINTHjqr2AwqU8ky3uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1469.82)):

Now, if John had stopped there, we could end in feel-good fashion with that story, smile and say awe, and wind things down. But John doesn't stop there. In fact, he goes on to add a charge, somewhat surprising charge, to the end of 1 John 3:18. He wrote, "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and," those two little words, "In truth." Those two little words turn much of what we think about loving each other squarely on its head. It's as if John is ratcheting up the involvement factor. It's one thing to serve and to love people with action. It's another to ground a relationship in truth, isn't it?

([25:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/dFBciItuMsbjaXJLwREStDGAhyNVLbM9awWu0-bmLAopX19qJXMFQDnOXUhM9my7KrHJ63CLmQP0Ez8_de3-BARHfBs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1521.03)):

We often think about loving each other meaning that we do whatever it takes to make someone happier regardless of what it is that's going on in their life. But here, John says, "Hey, sometimes the most loving thing we can do is tell someone the truth." Not in your face, "I just tell it like it is" fashion. That's not love, that's being a jerk, but in a way that says, "I care for you. I'm with you. I'm for you."

([25:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/4mSMGOYTCsnm2reYv0ZTHimjbNNG1crhoAP9BW1hKJdt0nuFYNEbYy0bwN8iPep7LMeykdjChLdLQa-68ApNfoG5RIk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1552.47)):

I have this friend back in Texas if you were trying to place the accent, it's Texas. And he and I, we met together every week for most of the time that we were there. And one week I had this idea and I asked him, I said, "Hey, Glenn, would you do me a favor? Would you love me enough to next week tell me something that you've seen in my life that you would've told me already if you weren't concerned about how I would react?" Glenn kind of chuckled too. He's like, "Yeah, maybe. Let me pray about it." But he agreed and the next week he came back ready and he told me, "Hey, you can be really, really stubborn."

([26:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/DHuqrQYKaQ8t6lGMUMOve_fqNYcPlZN6gD330CWiXCRuNHwoe7rB7LdrZwmPJyZDsX5NjaEs5PHGpzR7s5jyWD7-QTs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1591.35)):

Ouch. What do you say to that? I argued with him. Not really. I listened as he shared some specific examples, and one of them was that he had watched me not let my kids explain their side of the story at times whenever we're in a heated conversation. And he said, "I worry that that might come back to bite you one day." It didn't feel like it at the time, but Glenn gave me a gift that day. And to this day, I still think about his words and interactions with my kids years and years later. And at the end of that conversation, I thanked him, which I don't think is an inconsequential step, because loving in truth requires that we not only graciously speak truth into people's lives, but it also requires that we receive truth well also. And when we do that, when we open our lives up in that way, it allows us to see our blind spots in ways that help us grow in our life and in our faith.

([27:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/muLWoUTOjHftaS0oAXlU5OY4YrwaCyppTnrTEavA2aW22yBde4zbD3dQVut00qqQBSVEPlZhJsQaZbu3fz7Z_AnyetU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1668.18)):

I often get phone calls and emails from you guys and I love it, but I do have to admit that most of the time you're not reaching out to let me know how awesome our church is or how great you are doing. If you want to share that, please by all means, reach out to me this week. I'd love to hear those stories. But for the most part, something's gone wrong and more often than not, it's a relational breakdown of some sort that's at play. In a recent conversation with someone, they came and they wanted to tell me about a problem they were having with someone in their small group. Anybody ever experienced that? Yeah, you might get yourself in trouble raising your hand, but we've all been there.

([28:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/6ch1L5I8-tW2_TXEbIVr4zDn4l7Y71fLpRBmzAHQCto2DX8It0nRswaquTrPWGShIOPBaWqqRr_MKDYE89a9I6wvkgg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1711.2)):

And I asked lots of questions because I really wanted to understand the situation and what had gone down. And when I kind of put two and two together and traced it back to a moment, to a conversation that had stung a little bit, I told them, I said, "You know what I would do?" And they leaned in like, "All right, this is going to be good." I said, "I'd go back to them and I would say thank you." The stunned look on their face made it clear that wasn't what they were expecting. But I went on and I said, "Look, it's very rare that someone will love us enough to take the risk of speaking gracious truth into our lives."

([29:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/wLeh705KkyKfwBQyejhL9XRHcX6wuU4TUepR5ALFSCBWiY_r9hcWDC7NxzMnt9MGZFSDrB80NIQpdiYfxxaP6Syl6m8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1746.27)):

And from the sound of it, they've tried to do that, and I want to encourage you. I know it may not seem like a gift, but it is, and I just encourage you to honor the difficult step that they took to share that with you even if you disagree. God often uses people to speak into our lives and this group that you've described as broken, I actually think it's really healthy and one that I wished far more people got to experience. And to their credit, can I tell you, they stayed. They leaned into that conversation and they loved each other enough to hear and to receive truth well. I've often wondered about 1 John and why John was so fixated on loving those closest to us, brothers and sisters, we've read that a couple times in these verses.

([29:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VTFrf5XpvPwUWgrT1i6kNFUAFl2nfJakSaWtoeauWEBzwYjZOM2OAavoscY1-J4-XwaZSsVJfmZQrOmbf-kt7Ak96N8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1796.88)):

I mean, he had spent time with Jesus and he had heard him encourage his followers to take his message of love and grace to the ends of the earth. But I think John knew that it's hardest to love the people whose warts and annoying tendencies, and maddening shortcomings were so familiar with. It's one thing to love in missional bursts with people that we may never see again, but it's another to love in spite of toilet paper hanging, toothpaste tube squeezing, over-talking, political disagreement, familiarity, isn't it? And yet it's that gritty everyday love that overcomes differences, John says, that's genuine love, a love that he was desperate for us to know and to extend. Why? Because something truly beautiful happens when we do.

([31:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/J4qJ96tGU0TI6a1o0r_tkpEqcBoD5QcwwrNixZ__kg9BvE5NkNmd5WkFpNeifFdsSDJF97-QahQfFNa6t7jeplq0Kw0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1863.12)):

Let's look at 1 John 4:10. He wrote, "This is real love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God is in us and his love is brought to full expression in us." There's a lot happening in these verses, but at its core, what John is saying is this, that the love of God is most profoundly experienced when it's shared in an authentic way. The love of God is most profoundly experienced when it's shared in an authentic way. When a watching world catches us loving each other in sacrificial and honest ways, in response to the almost too good to be true love that he's shown us, it puts skin on an invisible God who is love itself.

([32:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/YJ22n5T8M4GD1difIlefP7lSxGupJj5sa7VPcJgsKmUn6tP7YOaRnBU0-34EtCNdTLjxUawiDqCWyoeCUNVCM64PKCM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1937.88)):

John prayed for just this in John 17, which we'll also read this week. We often talk about God's love, but I think we also often miss that it's through us that he expresses it in tangible and life-giving ways to others. And when we embrace that calling as conveyors of his love, when our heart beats in rhythm with his, we experience a sweet nearness with him that makes us and the person on the receiving end fully alive. And that's amazing. It's not easy. And John knew that the only way that we would get there and be able to give that kind of love would be to clearly recognize who we are or who we can become in Jesus, no matter what anyone else has ever told this. And making sure we know that was his most urgent aim of all.

([33:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Km_5n0JvZDdC9cZFcNhpfSYrooYxnGSvUSxoVhvbRWZZCJJmK69ppgCb44pE5qZQ5p2OKfe5tWU-O1bsYqEEPjci8a0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2000.46)):

How do I know that? Well, there's only one exclamation point in the entire letter, and my guess is it's not there by accident in 1 John 3:1. He wrote, summoning all the power and passion that he could in a letter, "See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are." John, now an old man, reflecting on those three years he spent with Jesus decades earlier and a lifetime of walking with and serving him ever since, says, "Guys, don't miss this. You've been called a lot of things in your life, but that is not who you are. God loves us so much and he calls you his own."

([34:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/v1kQkZ2m4KqdgbWqXOZF6Ox0mLv01Ogqre3bMVjtMFGZXAOFMRVEX2sSAAFTwVwUzPCEyPGxHBAuGAIeilSw-vqtv18?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2055.93)):

Anchoring love, John says, comes with an exclamation point, not a question mark. It's a perfect love that casts out all fear and uncertainty. It's a love that never ever walks out, a love that constantly reminds us that we're enough, but calls us to who it knows we can become. A love that gave it all so that you and I, we could be called a child of the King, exclamation point. A love that Jesus says has always been closer than we think.

([34:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EUmH2auaM7p5VFi5hvlHBNRzWNg_kquSFW2bEhOIAD8qYHHvMHweitpG7OD2XSqlHuW8GwSsBNJxnRKdEJMuX9cF8aI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2095.26)):

In the Book of Revelation, which we'll also read this week, Jesus asked John to write a letter to the church at Laodicea. It was one of seven churches in the Roman Empire that was struggling under the brutal oppression of Christianity by the Emperor Nero at the time, and they had grown a little bit lukewarm in their faith. And Jesus asked John to write these words to them in Revelation 3:19. He wrote, "So be diligent. Turn from your indifference. Look, I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." And my favorite part, "And we will share a meal together as friends."

([35:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MD5knY2RoJ_CYEzFRZv5bskE58IKkJqTsibPEaWmIUpRB6nLJiuDBX7oFTBpA26FtqNDzooxjpFripKGgNkSQC5x82c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2153.4)):

Some of you have been looking your whole life for a love like that. You've known something was off, you've guessed that there had to be something more, and the whole time Jesus has been close knocking, wanting to come in. Maybe you've heard that knock before, but you dismissed it not knowing who or what it was. Or maybe there's something in your past that makes you feel unworthy of a love like that. Some way, maybe it disqualifies you. But as you've read, you've gotten to know God's heart, you recognize that he doesn't just love you anyway. He longs to call you child, friend. You've searched for what's missing in a million different places, and here at the end of our Anchored Life Challenge, you recognize that he's just on the other side of the door. This is the exclamation point. This is beautiful truth. This is anchoring love.

([37:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/vyJjMLuC-kana_vg_5j-e0FmeYMJofnKD6Y_WCqmPwUsyV7h4SWyDpFbJJ7SRlU2l6WTdcaA59aoF0jEH6JPQpB_pzs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2236.11)):

For some of us, that staggering love. Somewhere along the way, that staggering love that once captured our heart and felt so near, became familiar, and maybe instead of that intimate relationship go everywhere together kind of relationship that we once enjoyed and shared, we've sort of pushed Jesus off into the margins of our lives, maybe without even recognizing it. But as we've read page after page, Jesus has been saying the same thing over and over again, "I'm here. I loved it when we walked together, we sat together, we spent time together, we ate meals together as friends. I won't force myself on you, but if you will open that door up again and let me into every aspect of your life, I'll carry it together with you like we used to."

([38:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/UAvjWdQb3KtznkCKjJtziwuZnbUk05RmEmQmgBG5qjIjQfOiS2U9bts9PZmGuFn2kKmy--p63knMx_-GBcHw-BFi93w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2296.05)):

When we began the Anchored Life Challenge seven weeks ago, we build it as a bucket list undertaking. And make no mistake about it, it is a Herculean task to read through the New Testament in eight weeks. And can I just say, I'm so, so proud of you guys, but checking a box has never been the goal, it's been our prayer all along for all of us that we would find and fall in love with Jesus for the first time or all over again as we encounter him on the pages of His Word.

([38:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/2ZnyWoFwsiW1IUsQwj76Zi3WCjZCTnS4li_E2hOWUOB0YFVu5sUNSlFnsj5XsuxQU8RRuMg9hR6Zmfg18wVomlujhlA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2335.38)):

As I was praying this prayer a few days ago for you, for me, I decided, "I'm going to go for a walk." And I grabbed my phone, I grabbed my earbuds, popped them in, pulled up the first worship playlist that I could, first song up was when I'd never heard before that put that prayer to such beautiful words. And I just had to stop for a minute and smile at God's kindness, as he said, "Here, wrap up with this." And so we're going to sing that song over you at all of our campuses this morning and give you just a few minutes to reflect on what it is that you've found over the past several weeks or maybe just here today. And when it's finished, I'll come back out and close this out.

Speaker 2 ([39:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/cCqDBYQwL2V1BGH2tibAGnBMxiLaipEErxHxo8i9dknbyzw8lMIrS-jQl7aJvPCTSITyt2zJmXtVlu424ZwGFOUsyUU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2380.77)):

(Singing.)

Jason Williams ([43:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/CinLo3xh7-hC2hyJOsirt7V8CszXvpVcx5cn8FwF4D0iNPSg1UVV7cT7XsOJJQWgplEsJ_fosjnNlhFrjgXhoDe6Mfs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2603.85)):

If you've never said yes to Jesus, I want to give you the opportunity to finish this journey with an exclamation point, not a question mark. By taking God up on his invitation to take that step and to join his family as a dearly loved child. And for the rest of us, our exclamation point could be reawakening to the great love that he's poured out on us and who he says that we are, a dear child, a beloved friend, and committing to love and response to that great love that he's shown to us more like he did with our words, with our actions, and in truth, in a way that causes a watching world to take note of our great God and his amazing love fully expressed in us.

([44:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/SuL3y0mAZr9-Ni_JPLO3OmSa3h9GMYBLqA6z33yND_d8mCRKMpdDnrlAMT4LPqJX30TXFgDNVutxB1zhFbYl1hs76m8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2656.02)):

Would you join me in prayer? If today you've heard that knock maybe for the first time and you're ready to say yes to Jesus, I just invite you to pray something along these lines with me. God, I thank you that you sent Jesus to die for my sins and that he's been knocking all this time. I don't want to do it alone anymore. Today, I want to open that door. I want to give my life to Jesus and to be made new. Thank you for loving me the way that you do. And Father, I just thank you for your Word, the gift that it is, the way that it anchors our hearts and lives. I thank you for this journey that we've been on, but I pray, Father, that it wouldn't end here, but that this would just be the beginning of a lifetime of closeness with you.

([45:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/x3J7SVxDhapK66SunDuM65QdHyHyJcRnSYKKX8bwdDrnxWkNIqYdt3fuQSPvW8rg-3CHbJnxaGwrd-Igu3ZlIJlkwo8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2719.92)):

And God, would you stir in our hearts a fresh reminder of the incredible love that you showed in sending your Son to take our place and stir in us a response to that love that is committed to loving the people that you've placed in our lives really well, in a way that anchors us and that anchors them. Father, we thank you for this time. We thank you for meeting us in this place, and we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.