

# 1, 2, & 3 John

Walking With God

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## ONE

# WALK IN THE LIGHT

**Read 1 John 1;  
other references as given.**

If you had been one of Christ's disciples, what would you have told others about Jesus Christ and His message? You heard Him speak, you heard Him pray, and you touched Him. You watched Him heal the sick, feed the poor, raise the dead, and rebuke the religious imposters. You saw the multitude cheer Him when He entered Jerusalem, and you were horrified when the mob screamed, "Crucify Him." You were bewildered when you heard He was resurrected. You even saw Him miraculously ascend into heaven. You were there.

The apostle John, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), recalls his personal experiences with Jesus and the message He proclaimed. God is life, God is light, and God is love. True followers of God live a new life in Christ, walk in the light (truth) of God's Word, and love others with His divinely inspired affection and devotion. These three recurring themes reverberate throughout John's pastoral letter and teach us to walk closely with God. Before you begin each lesson in this study, ask God to reveal the truth to you and transform you into the image of Jesus Christ.

1. Technically the book of 1 John is anonymous, but Polycarp (69–156/157 AD), a disciple of John's and an early Christian leader, identified the apostle John as its writer. List four reasons for John's first letter.



### Early Bird Principle

When the leader arrives 10-15 minutes early, he or she has time to pray, prepare the room, and greet the participants personally.

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ADD GROUP  
INSIGHTS BELOW



## 1, 2, & 3 John: Walking With God

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### ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

1 John 1:3: \_\_\_\_\_

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1 John 1:4: \_\_\_\_\_

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1 John 2:1: \_\_\_\_\_

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1 John 5:13: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The dominant theme of 1 John is walking with God (1 John 1:6–7; 2:6, 11), but John was not the first biblical writer to use the “walking” metaphor to describe a believer’s ongoing relationship with God. Interestingly, it is the first descriptor of man’s relationship with God. The Bible says **And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him** (Genesis 5:22, 24) and **Noah walked with God** (Genesis 6:9). Of the 283 times the word **walk** is used in the Old Testament, it is used 232 times metaphorically as an encouragement to walk in the ways of the Lord or as a rebuke for walking in the ways of the wicked.

- a. In the New Testament the word **walk** (Greek *peripateo*) is used 64 times (of 105 times) metaphorically to describe an individual’s relationship to God. What *do you think* it means to walk with God? (Try to give more than a simplistic answer such as “live for God every day.”)

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- b. If you are a Christian, do you know how to walk with God? ☐ Yes ☐ No



- ☐ I am not sure what it means to walk with God.
- ☐ I am not sure what it means to be a Christian.

*If you are not sure that you are a Christian, turn to the back of this study guide and read the Final Exam. It will explain how you can have a personal relationship with God, which is the first step to walking with God.*

3. Walking with God is an important spiritual concept that speaks of a Christian's ongoing relationship with Christ. Rather than seeing the Christian life as transactional (read my Bible, pray, go to church, do good deeds, evangelize, don't use God's name in vain, etc.), walking with God refers to something more integrated—a moment-by-moment communion with Jesus Christ. What other terms and phrases does the Bible use to communicate this important spiritual truth?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (1 John 2:6, 10).
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 8:14).
4. In Ephesians chapters four and five, the apostle Paul frequently used the “walk” metaphor to help the Ephesian believers comprehend their new life in Christ. Complete the following phrases to help you understand what it means to walk with God.
  - a. Walk \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 4:1).
  - b. Do not walk \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 4:17).
  - c. Walk in \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 5:2).
  - d. Walk \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 5:8).
  - e. Walk \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 5:15).



Would you like to learn how to disciple another person, lead a life-changing Bible study, or start a new study? Lamplighters Int'l ministries can help guide you.

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ADDITIONAL  
INSIGHTS



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5. Except for 1 John and Hebrews, the New Testament letters (not the Gospels) begin with an introduction of the writer, an identification of the recipients, and an expression of blessing (for example, 1 Corinthians 1:1–3). Even 2 and 3 John follow this standard New Testament pattern. *Why do you think 1 John begins so abruptly and with its emphasis on what the apostle John saw and heard (1 John 2:18–22, 26; 4:1–3, 5)?*

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6. The opening phrase **That which was from the beginning** (1 John 1:1) reminds us of Genesis 1:1 (**In the beginning God**) and John 1:1 (**In the beginning was the Word**). *Do you think the phrase in 1 John 1:1 refers to (1) the beginning of Creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1), (2) the beginning of Jesus' public ministry that John witnessed firsthand, or (3) both? \_\_*

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. In the original Greek language of the New Testament, 1 John 1:1–4 forms one long sentence with the subject and the main verb (**we declare**) not appearing until verse three. Some translations of the Bible move the subject and verb (we declare or proclaim) up to verse one to help readers understand the introduction to John's letter more easily.

- a. What does John say about what he and the other apostles experienced?

1. **We have** \_\_\_\_\_ (Him) (v. 1).

2. **We have** \_\_\_\_\_ (Him) **with our eyes** (v. 1).

3. **We have** \_\_\_\_\_ **upon** (Him) (v. 1).

4. **Our hands have** \_\_\_\_\_ (Him) (v. 1).



- b. The phrase **the Word of life** (1 John 1:1) also reminds us of John 1:1 where the Word is identified as Jesus (John 1:14, **the only begotten of the Father**). In 1 John 1:1, the apostle John adds the words **of life**. What *do you think* is the meaning of the phrase **Word of life**?

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8. After John testified about Christ's incarnation (His physical time on earth), he recalled the message that he and the other apostles heard from Him (1 John 1:5 ff.). John contrasts Christ's message (God is light/truth) with the message proclaimed by those who said they were children of light but who were living in darkness/sin (1 John 1:5–10). The words (**If we say** ...; NIV: "If we claim") appear three times in 1 John 1 (vs. 6, 8, 10). Complete the following false statements (lies) with God's divine answer to each statement.

- a. 1 John 1:6: **If we say that we have fellowship with Him** (Jesus), **and we walk in darkness** (sin), \_\_\_\_\_

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- b. 1 John 1:8: **If we say that we have no sin**, \_\_\_\_\_

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- c. 1 John 1:10: **If we say that we have not sinned**, \_\_\_\_\_

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9. In 1 John 1:9 the Bible says, **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**, but it seems the verse should read *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and merciful to forgive our sins*. While God is merciful to forgive a Christian's



Using table tents will help visitors feel more comfortable when they attend the group. If you are meeting online, encourage the participants to "rename" themselves if necessary.

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ADDITIONAL  
INSIGHTS



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sins, why *do you think* He is also **just** to forgive a believer's sins (Romans 3:23–26)?

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10. The Bible says **if we confess our sins**, not if we confess our sin (1 John 1:9). There is a big difference between a general admission that you are a sinner and confessing your sins. Do you confess your sins to God daily?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No  
☐ I have never done that, but I think I will start doing that.

11. In Daniel 9:4–19, the prophet Daniel offers a beautiful prayer that is a model of sincere confession. The first portion of Daniel's prayer (vs. 4–15, confession) is followed by an appeal to God for mercy (vs. 16–19). The Lord "interrupts" Daniel's prayer and gives one of the most profound revelations regarding Israel's future and the end of the world (Daniel 9:24–27). Daniel's *confession* of sin led to a *confidence* to ask God for mercy, which led to a *culmination*—God's answer to the prophet's prayer. Why is the genuine confession of our sins to God essential for receiving answers to prayer (Psalm 66:18)?

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12. What is the most important truth you learned from this lesson?

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# LEADER'S GUIDE

## Lesson 1: Walk in the Light

1.
  - a. 1 John 1:3: John wrote to help believers to live for God so they would have close fellowship with the Father and with all those who walk in truth (1 John 1:3). The statement **that which we have seen and heard we declare to you** indicates that John was sharing a common faith that he (John) and the other apostles experienced. False religious teachers often create a spiritual separation between them and their followers so they might seek them (Galatians 4:17). John invites every believer to experience the common faith that can be received and enjoyed by all Christians.
  - b. 1 John 1:4: John wrote so believers might be filled with joy.
  - c. 1 John 2:1: John wrote so believers can learn to live free from sin.
  - d. 1 John 5:13: John wrote so believers can have complete assurance of their salvation.
2.
  - a. Walking with God is living in harmony with God and His will as revealed in His Word and being led by the Holy Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis. It doesn't mean sinless perfection, and it's not something transactional—the dutiful fulfillment of an endless list of dos and don'ts. It is living with the constant awareness of the presence of the Lord, being fully surrendered to His will at all times, and having as your supreme joy to please Him with every thought, deed, and action. Other answers could apply.
  - b. Answers will vary.
3.
  - a. Abides in Him (Christ), abides in the light (1 John 2:6, 10).
  - b. Led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14).
4.
  - a. Walk worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1).
  - b. Do not walk as the Gentiles (unsaved) (Ephesians 4:17).
  - c. Walk in love (Ephesians 5:2).
  - d. Walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8).
  - e. Walk circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15).



5. The opening words of 1 John (verses 1–4) emphasize the reality and importance of Christ’s incarnation. In these opening verses John confronts the antichrists (religious heretics who denied Christ’s incarnation; see Introduction) who believed that Jesus became the Christ at His baptism and that the Christ left the man Jesus sometime before the crucifixion. According to this view, it was not the real Jesus Christ who died on the cross but a man named Jesus. This heretical doctrine undermined Christ’s atonement, and John attacked this heresy with a vengeance by offering his eyewitness account of what he saw and heard. John wanted to communicate the truth about Jesus and the incarnation so his readers might know the reality of Christ’s incarnation and avoid being led into error.
6. In the context (1 John 1:1) it appears that John is referring to the beginning of Christ’s ministry and the initial interaction that he (John) and other apostles had with Jesus. However, the wording is strikingly similar to Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1, so the phrase could easily be understood as a statement about Jesus’ eternal preexistence. It is probably best not to be dogmatic about the specific interpretation. Both interpretations could be true.
7.
  - a.
    1. **We have heard** (Him) (v. 1).
    2. **We have seen** (Him) **with our eyes** (v. 1).
    3. **We have looked upon** (Him) (v. 1).
    4. **Our hands have handled** (Him) (v. 1).
  - b. The phrase refers to Jesus Christ. The word **Word** (Greek, *logos* – reason, word, speech) refers to God’s revelation, and the phrase **Word of life** refers to the message of God that says Jesus not only leads to life (salvation), but He is the life. Jesus said **I am the way, the truth, and the life** (John 14:6).
8.
  - a. 1 John 1:6: ... **we lie and do not practice the truth.**
  - b. 1 John 1:8: ... **we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**
  - c. 1 John 1:10: ... **we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**
9. While God is merciful to forgive our sins, He is also just because He promised to forgive sin, and He is faithful to keep His word. God is just and righteous to do what He promised. To not keep His word would be unjust and unrighteous. Other answers may apply.



10. Answers will vary.
11. A believer's confession of his sin is a prerequisite for answers to prayer. Psalm 66:18 says **If I regard** (harbor, cherish, hold onto) **iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear** (regard my prayer with an intent answer).
12. Answers will vary.