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How Do You Know God's Your Father?

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Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

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WATERBROOK
P R E S S

HOW DO YOU KNOW GOD'S YOUR FATHER?

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HOW DO YOU KNOW GOD'S YOUR FATHER?

During Jesus' ministry He turned to some religious leaders and said, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). What an affront that must have been to men who thought they had God as their father.

What does a genuine Christian look like? Have you ever wondered? And what about you? Are you a Christian? Do you know you are going to heaven? Or can a person know for sure?

We have often counseled people who are struggling with doubts about their relationship with God. It is a miserable way to live—always wondering, always hoping, but never certain. They have no joy, no peace, no confidence—only anguish.

With eternity hanging in the balance, you need to know where you stand with God. In other words, who's your father—God or the devil?

For the next six weeks we will study 1 John together and seek answers to this question. Sometimes the truth will excite you, sometimes you will praise God for revealing Himself to you, and sometimes the truth will make you uncomfortable. Very uncomfortable. The truth does that. But please don't quit; the truth will also set you free.

WEEK ONE

One of Jesus' disciples, John, wrote five of the books in the Bible. One of them, a letter known as 1 John, was written to answer our question: "How do you know God's your Father?" We'll begin our study by letting John tell us exactly why he wrote this letter.

OBSERVE

Leader: *Read aloud 1 John 1:1-4; 2:1-2,26; and 5:13, reprinted for you in the sidebars on pages 3-5.*

- *Underline the words **write, writing, or written** with a squiggly line like this:*



Have the group say aloud the words they are marking. This way no one will miss marking the word. Do this throughout the study.

DISCUSS

- Look at each place you have marked the word *write*. According to these verses, why is John writing this letter? What are the reasons he gives?

1 JOHN 1:1-4

¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1 JOHN 2:1-2

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

- What's the last reason John gives in 1 John 5:13?

- Why do you think it was important that his readers know that they have eternal life?

- What does 1 John 5:13 tell you about eternal life? So many people say you won't know if you'll get into heaven until you stand before God and He weighs the good against the bad. According to 1 John 5:13, is that true?

1 JOHN 2:26

These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

1 JOHN 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 JOHN 1:1-3

¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

OBSERVE

Leader: Read aloud 1 John 1:1-3 again.

This time instruct the group to mark...

- every reference to the **author** by putting a box around every **we** and **our**:
- **the Word of Life** (which is a reference to Jesus Christ) and any other synonyms with a cross: †

DISCUSS

- What do you learn about John from marking references to *we* and *our*?
- What do you learn from marking the references to *Jesus Christ*, the Word of Life?
- Why do you think John is telling this to the recipients of this letter? What would this information do for them? Does it mean anything to you?

WRAP IT UP

John was an eyewitness of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was a disciple, a student of Jesus. He was even one of the select group of twelve, an apostle. He had a commission from Jesus Christ to speak and to write with His authority. We are studying the words of a man who knew Jesus intimately, personally. He walked with Him, ate with Him, and listened to Him as He taught. What John has written is inspired by God and without any error at all. Therefore we need to hear and heed what the Holy Spirit says.

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Those who claim to have fellowship with Him must walk in the light. The question is, are you walking in the light? To walk in the light is to live your life in such a way that, no matter who is watching, you never have reason to be ashamed of what you are doing. Are you letting your light shine before men in such a way that they see your good works and glorify God?

The apostle John, in writing this letter, wants us to know whether or not we have eternal life. Everything we study in this letter relates to this purpose. You need to know. You must know. Eternity hangs in the balance. Do you have eternal life? Are you walking in the light?

Next week we will continue in our study of 1 John. We will learn more about the characteristics of a child of God and, by comparison, the characteristics of a child of the devil.



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No-Homework Bible Studies

That Help You Discover Truth For Yourself

