



LIFEgroup Study Guide

January 24 - March 14

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
[www.lbf.church/messages]

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
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1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

The Word of Life

Lesson 1 • January 24 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God's message to the world is an invitation to oneness with him.

Getting Started

1. How would you summarize in one sentence what you are inviting someone to do when inviting them to become a Christian?

2. For you personally, what gives you confidence that the Christian message is true?

Digging In

Read 1 John 1:1-4.

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we

proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. After you look at verse 1, read John 1:1. What similarities do you see between the way John begins each of these books that he wrote?

5. John says several things in these opening verses about the historical reality of Jesus—"we have seen with our eyes," "our hands have touched," "what we have seen and heard." What do you think we are meant to gain from these statements?

6. According to verse 3 John's purpose for writing this letter has to do with "fellowship." What do you think it means to have fellowship (1) with other believers in Jesus and (2) with God himself?

10. If the goal of the Christian message is for people to have fellowship with God (and with his people), what are some practical ways that Christians can experience this fellowship?

7. Look at verse 4. Why do you think John's joy is tied in to the fellowship he spoke of in verse 3?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In this letter John speaks a lot about how we can know what is true. Do you think it is possible to truly and fully know that the gospel of Jesus is true? Explain your answer.

Taking It To Heart

9. What ways has God shown himself in your life, so that you have greater confidence that he is real and that he is trustworthy?

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

Light and Darkness

Lesson 2 • January 31 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God calls his people both to acknowledge sin and to avoid sin.

Getting Started

1. For average Americans today, what attitudes do you think exist toward the idea of sin?

2. Do you find yourself more tempted to minimize your sin or to berate yourself when you sin?

Digging In

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 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.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Focus on verses 5-7. How does John define what it means to walk in light instead of darkness?

5. In verses 8-10, what does John say are the results if we (a) claim not to have any sin or (b) confess our sins?

6. Focus on John's amazing words in 2:1. Do you believe that you need to be more encouraged to (1) fight to avoid sin or (2) fight against despair after you've sinned?

7. In 2:2, John calls Jesus "the atoning sacrifice for our sins." This means that he paid the penalty for our sins. What does this verse tell you about both the justice and the mercy of God?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In 2:2, John writes that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice "for the sins of the whole world." Does this mean that the sins of every single person in the world will be forgiven? Why or why not?

Keeping the Theme in Mind

9. What do you see in this passage that ties into John's theme of knowing the truth about both God and about ourselves?

Taking It To Heart

10. John tells us to confess our sins to God, which means (a) to acknowledge them to him and (b) to agree with him about the wrongness of them. What practices do you have (or want to have) about how you regularly confess your sins to God?

11. Name one way that you can help others in your sphere of influence to (1) fight against sin and (2) experience the joy of God's forgiveness for their sins.

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

The Test of Obedience

Lesson 3 • February 7 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

A core proof of belonging to Jesus is obedience to his commands.

truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Getting Started

1. Of all the Americans who claim to be Christians, what percentage do you think truly belong to Jesus? Explain your answer.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

2. In what areas do you find it most difficult to obey God's commands?

4. John's statement in verse 3 is similar to Jesus' words in John 14:15: "If you love me, keep my commands." Why do you think obedience is such a significant test of whether or not we have come to know God?

Digging In

Read 1 John 2:3-6.

3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the

5. In verse 4, is John saying that anyone who ever disobeys God cannot claim to know him? If not, what do you think John has in mind when he talks about keeping his commands?

6. Focus on verse 5. What do you think it means for God's love to be made complete in someone? Look at the context when coming to a conclusion.

7. What are some specific commands that John might have in mind when he talks about believers needing to live as Jesus did?

Taking It To Heart

10. What response does this passage bring about in you as you reflect on obedience to God in your own life?

11. John says that our obedience is a sign that God's love has been made complete in us. If you find your obedience to God lacking, what do you think God would have you do in response?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. How do you think John would want someone to respond if they took the "test" of this passage and found that their life was not marked by obedience or Christlikeness?

Remembering the Theme

9. Does John's teaching here mean that we can know whether or not other people are truly Christians? Explain your answer.

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

Love and Hate

Lesson 4 • February 14 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The core Christian command is to love one another.

Getting Started

1. Name three things that would indicate to you that someone loves you.

2. What kinds of people do you find yourself most tempted to hate?

Digging In

Read 1 John 2:7-11.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a

brother or sister is still in the darkness. 10 Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Focus on verses 7 and 8. How is the command to love one another is both old and new?

5. What are some practical ways that both love and hate manifest themselves in your life?

6. Many secular people talk about the need for us to love one another. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How does the biblical idea of love differ from the idea of love that is common in American culture today?

7. John emphasizes that those in the darkness cannot see what is happening. What are some ways that hating others can result in blindness and confusion?

Taking It To Heart

10. In what ways do you need to repent of lack of love, or of hatred toward others?

11. Loving others is not the path to walking with God, but rather the result of walking with God. How can you draw near to God in ways that will empower you to love others?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. John calls believers not simply to love people in general, but specifically to love their brothers and sisters. How does the specific call for Christians to love one another put the gospel of Jesus on display?

Remembering the Theme

9. In John 13:35 Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Why do you think love is such a core way that Christians can be identified?

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

What Do You Love

Lesson 5 • February 21 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

We must choose between loving the world and loving God.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that temporary things can distract you from eternal realities?

2. How could you identify a person who is worldly?

Digging In

Read 1 John 2:12-17.

12 I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

14 I write to you, dear children,

because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,

because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

because you are strong,

and the word of God lives in you,

and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Verses 12-14 name three groups of people and the reason John is writing this letter for each of them. What stands out to you about his words in these verses?

5. In verse 15 John depicts the battle going on for each person as a battle over what we choose to love. Why do you think what we love is so central to how our lives will unfold?

6. In verse 16 John defines “the world” by naming three things: (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life. Give a definition for what you think John means for each of these three things.

7. In verse 17 John says that the world and its desires pass away. What are some ways that you can see the temporary nature of “the world” as John defined it in verse 16?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. How can we discern the difference between loving the world and simply enjoying God’s good gifts to us?

Remembering the Theme

9. Christians are meant to have a unique relationship with the world. What are some tangible ways that believers can be identified and recognized because of our relationship with the world?

Taking It To Heart

10. Of the three elements of the love of the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—which one causes the greatest problems for you? Look to be specific.

11. How can you more purposefully give your love and affection to God?

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

The Anointing

Lesson 6 • February 28 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to know truth from error.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that you discern whether or not something is true?

2. Share about a time when you changed your mind about something that you had previously thought was true.

Digging In

Read 1 John 2:18-27.

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to

us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. In verses 18-19 John warns against false teachers who he calls “antichrists.” In light of John’s words in verse 19, how should we think about false teachers who used to be a part of the church?

5. Look at John’s words about the “anointing” in verse 20 and then verse 27. Then read what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit in John 14:26. According to these passages, what role does the Holy Spirit play in the lives of believers?

6. In verses 22-23 John zeroes in on how we can know and recognize true believers. John could have highlighted the need to believe any number of Christian teachings. Why do you think he placed such emphasis on our beliefs about Jesus?

7. In verse 24 and 27 John commands believers to “remain.” This is the same word Jesus used in John 15:5 in his analogy of the vine and the branches. What are some practical ways that believers can “remain” instead of being led astray?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Anybody could make the claim that the Holy Spirit has told them something. How can we discern whether what someone is saying is truly from the Holy Spirit or not?

Remembering the Theme

9. John says that the false teachers (antichrists) revealed that they were not true believers because they departed from the faith. What role does perseverance play in recognizing true Christians as opposed to those who simply claim to be Christians?

Taking It To Heart

10. The Holy Spirit inspired and led those who wrote the Bible (2 Peter 1:21). If the Holy Spirit is leading us into truth, he certainly intends to use Scripture as a huge part of that. How can you personally spend more time exposing yourself to the Bible?

11. The authors of the New Testament show great concern about the danger of false teachers. How can you personally protect yourself from being led astray by lies?

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

When He Appears

Lesson 7 • March 7 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The ultimate Christian hope is in Jesus' return.

Getting Started

1. Share about a time that you were really looking forward to something in the future. What did that anticipation look like?

2. How does your belief in the second coming of Jesus impact your daily life?

Digging In

Read 1 John 2:28-3:3.

18 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on

us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 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. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Focus on verse 28. What would make someone confident when Jesus appears and what might make someone ashamed when he appears?

5. In 3:1, John speaks about us being children of God and about the world not knowing us. What are some signs that demonstrate that the world does not recognize Christians as the children of God?

6. In what ways do you think, when Jesus appears, we will be “like him?” Use Scripture to support your answers.

11. What would need to change in your life for you to be more confident and less ashamed at the idea of Jesus returning?

7. According to verse 3, what is the connection between hope and living a pure life?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. How do you think Christians can live with proper confidence, knowing our identity, without being arrogant because of our privileged status as the children of God?

Remembering the Theme

9. In 3:1, John connects our identity as children of God with God lavishing his love on us. What are some ways that you have experienced God lavishing his love on you?

Taking It To Heart

10. John says that Jesus’ return is our hope. What are some other things that tempt you to hope in them?

1 JOHN THATS HOW YOU KNOW

What About Sin?

Lesson 8 • March 14 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Christians are free from the power of sin.

Getting Started

1. Do you tend to be more optimistic or more pessimistic about how much victory you can have over the sin in your life?

2. How do you think the sins of Christians impact people who are skeptical about Jesus and about Christianity?

Digging In

Read 1 John 3:4-10.

4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Look at John's definition of sin in verse 4. What strikes you most about what he says?

5. Look at John's statements in both verse 5 and verse 8 about why Jesus appeared. How do these two statements go together?

6. In verse 6, John talked about those who "keep on sinning." In verse 9, he talks about those who "continue to sin." As believers, what do you think these phrases are meant to tell us about what role we should expect sin to play in our lives?

7. John ends verse 10 by talking about loving one another. What significance do you think love (or lack of love) has in this discussion about sin?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Sin and temptation are constant realities for Christians (Galatians 5:16-18). In light of this fact, what do you think it looks like for Christians to experience victory over sin?

Remembering the Theme

9. In verse 10 John says that our freedom from sin is a big part of what identifies us as children of God,

while the practice of sin is what identifies children of the devil. What are some ways that you have seen your battle against sin impact your witness to non-Christians?

Taking It To Heart

10. How has this passage left you feeling? Encouraged or discouraged? Hopeful or guilty?

11. Galatians 5:16-18 tells us that if we walk by the Spirit we will not indulge our flesh in sinful ways. How can you more actively walk by the Holy Spirit?