

1 John Chapter 1 — Crawford Standard Bible

“God Is Light”

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study with Cross References in Simple American English

I. THE WORD OF LIFE

1 John 1:1

Verse:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and touched with our hands—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”

Explanation

John begins by emphasizing that Jesus Christ was not a legend, a vision, or merely an idea. John and the other apostles **personally experienced Jesus**. They heard Him speak, saw Him with their own eyes, watched His ministry, and even touched Him.

John calls Jesus “**the Word of life.**” This connects directly with the opening of John's Gospel, where Jesus is identified as the eternal Word who was with God and was God.

Christian faith is based upon the historical revelation of Jesus Christ.

Cross References

John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:14

“The Word became human and lived among us. We saw His glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:4

“In Him was life, and that life was the light of humanity.”

Bible Study Question

What does John mean when he says that he heard, saw, looked at, and touched the Word of life?

Answer

John is emphasizing that Jesus truly came in human flesh. The apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ. Their message was based upon what they personally experienced, not something they invented or imagined.

II. ETERNAL LIFE HAS BEEN REVEALED

1 John 1:2

Verse:

“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.”

Explanation

Jesus is the visible revelation of **eternal life**. John says that this life was “with the Father” and appeared to humanity through Jesus Christ.

Eternal life is not simply living forever. It is having a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Cross References

John 1:4

“In Him was life, and that life was the light of humanity.”

John 14:6

“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

1 John 5:20

“We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true God. And we are in the true God by being in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

Bible Study Question

Who is the source and revelation of eternal life?

Answer

Jesus Christ is the revelation of eternal life. He came from the Father and makes the Father known to us.

III. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

1 John 1:3

Verse:

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Explanation

John's purpose is not merely to give people information about Jesus. He wants people to **enter into fellowship with God**.

Christian fellowship begins with fellowship with the Father and the Son. Believers are brought together because they share a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:9

“God is faithful. He has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

John 17:21

“May they all be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Philippians 2:1

“Since there is encouragement in Christ, comfort from His love, fellowship with the Spirit, and tenderness and compassion...”

Bible Study Question

What is the foundation of true Christian fellowship?

Answer

True Christian fellowship is founded upon a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Believers have fellowship with one another because they share fellowship with Christ.

IV. COMPLETE JOY

1 John 1:4

Verse:

“We write these things to you so that your joy may be complete.”

Explanation

John wants believers to experience **complete spiritual joy**. This joy comes from knowing Christ, walking with Him, and living in fellowship with God.

Biblical joy is deeper than temporary happiness. Circumstances can change, but the believer's relationship with Christ provides a lasting source of joy.

Cross References

John 15:11

“I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

John 16:24

“Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.”

2 John 1:12

“I have many things to write to you, but I do not want to write them with paper and ink. I hope to come to you and speak with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.”

Bible Study Question

Where does complete Christian joy come from?

Answer

Complete joy comes from fellowship with Jesus Christ and from knowing that we belong to God.

V. GOD IS LIGHT

1 John 1:5

Verse:

“This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.”

Explanation

This is one of the great declarations of 1 John:

God is light.

Light represents God's holiness, truth, purity, righteousness, and revelation.

John does not say that God merely **has** light. He says that **God is light**.

There is absolutely no moral darkness, evil, deception, or corruption in God.

Cross References

John 1:5

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 8:12

“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’”

James 1:17

“Every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the Father of lights. He does not change like shifting shadows.”

Bible Study Question

What does it mean that God is light?

Answer

It means that God is completely holy, truthful, pure, and righteous. There is no darkness or evil in Him.

VI. CLAIMING FELLOWSHIP WHILE WALKING IN DARKNESS

1 John 1:6

Verse:

“If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.”

Explanation

John now gives a serious warning.

A person cannot truthfully claim to have fellowship with God while deliberately living in darkness.

Walking in darkness means living contrary to God's truth and refusing to allow His Word to govern our lives.

John is not teaching that Christians never sin. The next verses make clear that believers must confess their sins. Instead, he is confronting the person who **claims to belong to God while intentionally living a life opposed to God.**

Cross References

John 3:19

“This is the judgment: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their works were evil.”

Titus 1:16

“They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for anything good.”

Ephesians 5:8

“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”

Bible Study Question

Can someone claim fellowship with God while deliberately walking in darkness?

Answer

No. A person's claim to know God must be consistent with the direction of his or her life. Christians still stumble and sin, but they should not deliberately make darkness their way of life.

VII. WALKING IN THE LIGHT

1 John 1:7

Verse:

“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.”

Explanation

Walking in the light means living openly before God, believing His truth, obeying His Word, and refusing to hide sin.

Notice something important: **walking in the light does not mean being sinless.**

John immediately says that the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse believers from sin.

The Christian life is not perfection without failure. It is a life of continually coming into God's light and allowing Christ to cleanse us.

Cross References

Ephesians 1:7

“In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace.”

Hebrews 9:14

“How much more will the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God?”

Revelation 1:5

“To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood.”

Bible Study Question

What happens when believers walk in the light?

Answer

They experience fellowship with other believers, and the blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses them from sin.

VIII. THE DANGER OF DENYING SIN

1 John 1:8

Verse:

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Explanation

John directly confronts the idea that a person can become completely free from sin in this present life.

Everyone has a sinful nature and everyone needs God's grace.

The danger is not merely committing sin. The danger is **refusing to admit that we sin**.

When a person says, "I have no sin," that person is deceiving himself.

Cross References

Romans 3:23

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Proverbs 20:9

"Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin'?"

Ecclesiastes 7:20

"There is no righteous person on earth who always does what is right and never sins."

Bible Study Question

Why is denying our sin dangerous?

Answer

Because denying sin prevents us from recognizing our need for God's forgiveness. A person who claims to have no sin is deceiving himself and rejecting the truth.

IX. CONFESSION BRINGS FORGIVENESS

1 John 1:9

Verse:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Explanation

This is one of the most beloved promises in Scripture.

John gives us God's response when we honestly acknowledge our sins:

He forgives.

Confession means agreeing with God about our sin instead of making excuses for it.

Notice that God promises both **forgiveness** and **cleansing**.

God does not merely remove the guilt; He also works to cleanse us from unrighteousness.

Cross References

Proverbs 28:13

“Whoever hides his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and turns away from them will receive mercy.”

Psalms 32:5

“Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not hide my guilt. I said, ‘I will confess my sins to the Lord,’ and You forgave the guilt of my sin.”

James 5:16

“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

Bible Study Question

What does God promise when we confess our sins?

Answer

God promises to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He is faithful to His promise and does not reject the person who sincerely comes to Him in repentance.

X. THE SERIOUSNESS OF DENYING SIN

1 John 1:10

Verse:

“If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.”

Explanation

John closes the chapter with an even stronger warning.

To say, “**I have never sinned,**” is not merely an incorrect statement about ourselves. It contradicts what God has revealed about humanity.

God says that all people are sinners and need salvation.

Therefore, denying our sin means rejecting God's testimony.

The proper response to sin is not denial, excuses, or self-righteousness. The proper response is **confession, repentance, faith, and dependence upon Jesus Christ.**

Cross References

Romans 3:4

“Let God be true and every human being a liar. As Scripture says, ‘You will be proved right when You speak and You will prevail when You judge.’”

Romans 3:23

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

1 Kings 8:46

“When they sin against You—for there is no one who does not sin—and You become angry with them and allow them to be defeated by an enemy...”

Bible Study Question

Why does John say that claiming we have never sinned makes God a liar?

Answer

Because God has already declared that humanity is sinful. When someone denies that reality, he is rejecting God's Word and treating God's testimony as false.

XXXVI. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who is the “Word of life” in 1 John 1:1?

Answer:

The “Word of life” is Jesus Christ. John describes Him as the One whom the apostles personally heard, saw, and touched.

Question 2

Why does John emphasize that he personally saw and touched Jesus?

Answer:

John is establishing that Jesus truly came in human flesh. The apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ's life and ministry.

Question 3

What does 1 John 1:2 teach about eternal life?

Answer:

Eternal life was with the Father and was revealed to humanity through Jesus Christ.

Question 4

What is the purpose of John's message according to verse 3?

Answer:

John wants believers to have fellowship with the apostles and, more importantly, fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Question 5

What does “God is light” mean?

Answer:

God is completely holy, pure, truthful, righteous, and without any darkness or evil.

Question 6

What does it mean to walk in darkness?

Answer:

It means living contrary to God's truth and refusing to live according to His will.

Question 7

What does it mean to walk in the light?

Answer:

It means living in God's truth, living openly before Him, seeking holiness, and depending upon Jesus Christ for cleansing from sin.

Question 8

Does walking in the light mean that a Christian never sins?

Answer:

No. Verse 7 teaches that those walking in the light still need the blood of Jesus to cleanse them from sin. Christian maturity is not sinless perfection but faithful dependence upon Christ.

Question 9

What happens when we confess our sins?

Answer:

God forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Question 10

Why is confession important?

Answer:

Confession acknowledges the truth about our sin and allows us to receive God's promised forgiveness and cleansing.

Question 11

What happens when someone claims to have no sin?

Answer:

That person deceives himself and rejects the truth of God's Word.

Question 12

What is the difference between committing sin and living in darkness?

Answer:

A Christian can stumble into sin and then confess it. Walking in darkness describes a continuing pattern of living contrary to God while claiming fellowship with Him.

Question 13

Where does complete Christian joy come from?

Answer:

Complete joy comes through fellowship with Jesus Christ and with God the Father.

Question 14

What cleanses believers from sin?

Answer:

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses believers from sin.

Question 15

What is the central message of 1 John Chapter 1?

Answer:

The central message is that **Jesus Christ is the eternal Word of life, God is completely holy and is light, believers must walk in that light, and when we honestly confess our sins, God faithfully forgives and cleanses us.**

XXXVII. SPIRITUAL APPLICATION

1. Know Jesus Personally

John's faith was based upon a real Christ who came into the world.

Application:

Do not build your faith merely upon tradition or religious activity. Build it upon Jesus Christ.

2. Walk in the Light

God calls His people to live in truth rather than darkness.

Application:

Ask yourself:

- Am I being honest before God?
- Am I hiding any known sin?
- Am I obeying God's Word?
- Does my daily life reflect my profession of faith?

3. Do Not Make Excuses for Sin

John does not teach believers to pretend that sin does not exist.

Application:

When you sin, do not justify it. Bring it honestly before God.

4. Confess Your Sin

1 John 1:9 gives believers a tremendous promise.

Application:

Confession should be a regular part of the Christian life. We should quickly acknowledge our failures and seek God's forgiveness and cleansing.

5. Trust the Blood of Jesus

Our hope is not in our own goodness.

Application:

We are saved and continually cleansed because of Jesus Christ, not because we have achieved moral perfection.

6. Pursue Fellowship With God

Christianity is more than following religious rules.

Application:

Seek daily fellowship with the Father through Jesus Christ through prayer, Scripture, obedience, worship, and faith.

KEY DOCTRINAL TRUTHS FROM 1 JOHN 1

1. Jesus Christ Is the Word of Life

Jesus is the eternal life revealed to humanity.

2. Jesus Truly Came in the Flesh

John and the other apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ.

3. God Is Light

There is absolutely no darkness, evil, or corruption in God.

4. Believers Must Walk in the Light

Our lives should increasingly reflect God's truth and holiness.

5. Christians Still Need Forgiveness

Walking in the light does not mean never failing. It means bringing our failures into God's light.

6. The Blood of Jesus Cleanses From Sin

Our cleansing and forgiveness come through Jesus Christ.

7. Sin Must Be Confessed

God calls us to acknowledge our sins rather than hide or deny them.

8. God Is Faithful to Forgive

God promises forgiveness and cleansing to those who confess their sins.

9. Denying Sin Is Self-Deception

No human being can honestly claim to be completely without sin.

10. Fellowship With God Produces Joy

The closer we walk with Christ, the deeper our fellowship and spiritual joy become.

FINAL THOUGHT

1 John Chapter 1 gives us a simple but powerful message:

Jesus is the Word of Life.

God is Light.

We are sinners.

Jesus cleanses us.

We must walk in the light.

And when we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us.

The Christian life is not about pretending that we never fail. It is about **walking honestly before a holy God, trusting completely in Jesus Christ, and continually allowing His light to expose, cleanse, and transform our lives.**