

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 JOHN 1:1-10
Guide 1

We welcome corrections and constructive comments to improve these discussion leaders' guides.

Points for the leader to remember:

1. Give everyone an opportunity to host. This increases their investment/commitment to the group and provides a greater feeling of involvement and contributing to the life of the group.
2. Develop bible study discussion leaders among the group. The leaders usually grow fastest because of their serving in ministry.
3. Specialize in facilitating discovery through participation. Change is more likely to occur through self-discovery rather than didactic teaching. The strategy in these studies is to structure open-ended questions so as to encourage individual inductive reasoning and discovery learning. The 3 basic questions that the following questions are derived from are:
 - a. What does the scripture say?
 - b. What does it mean?
 - c. What does it mean to me here and now? or How do I apply this scripture to my life?
4. Read the "Rules of Engagement of a Neighborhood Bible study." It is important to abide by these rules because they are contained in most of our publicity and implied in the wording of our printed invitations to a bible study. Try to keep the study to one hour. That means you may have to stop before finishing this guide during this meeting and carry the discussion over to next meeting.
5. Do not read the answers provided in this study as the "approved solution." The answers are provided as subjective answers of the author to stimulate discussion and response after the group has had time to discuss a particular question.
6. The group coordinator should always accomplish the administrative functions such as announcements, circulating a sign-up sheet for host and discussion leader volunteers, and handle the opening and closing prayer times. The coordinator may lead the discussion because no one else will volunteer for the present but the coordinator should always accomplish leading the prayer times. The reasons for these rules will be explained later.
7. Do not press for personnel to agree to a theological position or closure to an agreed position either during or at the end of each session. Let the scripture speak for itself. We will cover the various aspects of relationships different ways with different scriptures over time. Give God an opportunity to change each person's views as He convicts them through the Word.

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Start the meeting:

Ice breaker: "To get to know each other, let's introduce ourselves by the familiar names we prefer and share what each of us expects to gain from this study this year."

Opening Prayer: [use step 1, opening prayer of "Developmental Prayer: such as...] We will now participate in reading portions of scripture as our opening prayer Turn to the last three Psalms, Psalm numbers 148, 149 and 150. You will notice that these are a series of phrases of praise of God. For the next few minutes let's read phrases of praise of God selected at random from these Psalms. Read one out loud and wait for someone else to read one before you read another. Let's go to prayer by reading phrases of praise...

[leader: note the time and allow 4 minutes for this opening prayer. At the end of 4 minutes close with...]
"In Jesus' name, Amen.

To: the group leader: (Read through 1 John 1:1-10, then read through this guide. We have attempted to make this guide as complete as possible to save you study time. You will note the guide is in four parts: 1. Context, 2. What does the scripture say? 3. What does it mean? 4. What does it mean to me?

DISCUSSION

As in the normal OCF Bible study, we will progress through four questions to study the scripture: (1) Context (2) What does it say? (3) What does it mean? and (4) What does it mean to me (or how do I apply it to my life?) We will be studying the book of 1 John near the back of your bible.

Some historical information 1 John:

- a. Date: Written about 90 A.D.
- b. Place: Written from Ephesus
- c. Author: John, the Apostle.
- d. Addressed to: all Christians, young and old.

Purpose: (1) That those who believed in Christ might know that they have eternal life (5:13), and (2) to warn against incipient heresies which later produced a corrupt and paganize form of Christianity.

Would someone read 1 John 1:1-4?

Now, let's use a form of the first discussion question: What does it say?... What short title would you give the first four verses?

v.1: What do the words, "What was from the beginning" mean to you? Christ was pre-existent to the beginning, or creation, of all things.

What does "seen, beheld, handled," mean? Personal experience of the apostles. Phrases connote the progressively deepening personal relationship with Christ.

What kind of meaning does "Word of Life" connote? Word: Greek word - logos - the Personal Word (testimony), Jesus Christ, the logos was one with the Father, eternal God, made manifest in the flesh. It is the personal expression of what God is, the interpretation of His nature (Jn 1:18). "Life" - He came that they might

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

have life (Jn 10:10), He defeated death, he Himself is life. If we take the Word into our lives, we are one with Him and have life.

v.2: How do you define "manifested?" Made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) apparent, visible, touchable. The personality of "The Word of Life."

What do you observe about the order of "seen, bear witness, and proclaim the eternal life." Progressive order: (1) personal experience, (2) public testimony (sharing and living), and (3) proclamation, or to state in public.

v.3: Someone give meaning to "what we have seen and heard we proclaim." Personal experience, a witness.

How would you define "fellowship"? Greek: koinonia, having in common, sharing with...

Now let's examine the words, "Our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ." What makes the fellowship of Christians unique from any other fellowship? Our fellowship is with each other and with God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus.

v.4: What does "our" refer to? Both the writer and the reader.

What is "joy"? A fruit of the Spirit. The result of our fellowship with the father and the Son. A feeling resulting from the knowledge that we have victory over anything this world can do to us.

Now, let's summarize by asking the question: What does this first portion of scripture mean? (Have volunteers share a summary of what this paragraph [w. 1-4J means.) It means that God has made provision through His Son for us to enter into an eternal, safe, and powerfully meaningful fellowship with Them and with each other, etc.

Let's discuss how we can apply to our lives (another form of the question: What does it mean to me?) God through Jesus wants us to have fellowship with Them and with others in the body of Christ, the Church. That we may experience a complete joy by entering fully into the fellowship of Christians through the Word.

Someone please read w. 5-10.

How would you title this section? "Light is to Life as Darkness is to sin.

What is the importance of the message from Him? Not hearsay, not second hand, directly from God.

Someone explain how light is related to life, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." See Jn. 1:4; He is light. Light is an essential condition of life. Light represents righteousness, truth, openness.

What does "darkness" represent? Satan, evil, sin unrighteousness.

There are seven "if" clauses in the section 1:5-2:6. What is the significance of "if"? The conditions following "if" serve to distinguish actual possession from mere profession.

v.6: What does v.6 say? We lie if we say we have fellowship with Him and continue to walk in the old way... in sin and unrighteousness.

What does "walk" mean? To be in continuing fellowship with the Father and Son, in step with Them, in harmony with Them.

**OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

v.7: What is the condition to obtain forgiveness of sin? Walking in the light as He is in the light. How is Jesus "in the light"? He is truth, life, and love. In Him there is no sin. What is the condition to "fellowship"? Walking in the light. What makes both forgiveness of sins and fellowship possible? The blood of Jesus. His dying for us as a sacrifice, the perfect lamb of God who knew no sin, died for us that we might have life.

v.8: How are we liars if we say we have no sin? Someone please read Romans 3:23 and someone else read Romans 6:23. Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:10 is a statement the we have all sinned (fallen short of God's will for our lives.) Romans 6:23 "wages": what we have earned is death. Death while we are living is separation from God; when we die, death is total separation, or hell.

Verse 8 speaks directly to some in the early church who were teaching that our soul was sinless even though the body sinned.

v.9: According to v.9 how do we rid ourselves of guilt from the past? By confession, openly admitting our specific sins to God. What is the result of confession? Cleansing from all past and current unrighteousness.

According to v.10, what if we say we have not sinned? We make God a liar. This is a definite sign that His Word is not in us. We do not have the Holy Spirit and are not saved.

What does this paragraph (w 5-10) mean? If we walk in darkness (sin) we have no fellowship with God. To have fellowship with the Father and the Son implies walking in light.

Someone please read John 1:12.

How do we become a child of God? By receiving Him or "believing". To believe in the Greek context of this word means "to adhere to, rely on, and trust in."

Someone read the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:20.

What does this mean to you? "Sup or eat with" implies to be a part of, a spiritual relationship of living with... a very close relationship.

Closing Prayer: Use step 1, closing prayer, as explained in "Developmental Prayer."

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 John 2:1-14
Guide 2

To the group leader: (Read through 1 John 2:1-14, then read through this guide. We have attempted to make this guide as complete as possible to save study time. You will note the guide is in four parts: 1) Context, 2) What does the scripture say?, 3) What does it mean?, 4) What does it mean to me? A measure of your success as a leader (discussion facilitator) is how little you talk and how much others participate and thereby discover meaning in the scriptures. Remember our rules: No one is called on to read, pray, or participate. All questions must be stated in such a manner that anyone can answer. Your main task is to illicit meaningful discussion--not to teach or dominate the study.

Step two of the developmental prayer sequence will be used which means 13 minutes will be devoted to prayer. It is important for you to complete this discussion so you may want to review to see where you should be at times during the discussion period. The "L" indicates a leader action or question. Answers are provided as guide only to give the leader a feeling of comfort with the scripture discussion. The () is information for the leader only.

L: (refer to "Developmental Prayer for the Bible Study Leader" and read instructions at Step One or Two, as appropriate for your group, Opening Prayer.)

L: "As in the normal OCF Bible Study, we will progress through four steps to study the scripture: 1) Context, 2) What does it say?, 3) What does it mean?, 4) What does it mean to me? Please turn to 1 John, Chapter 2.

1) Context. L: "We start the study with context. Remember, the aged Apostle John was writing at Ephesus, near the end of the first century, between A.D. 85 and 95. At this time heresy had grown within the church. Heresy is doctrinal error. The main problem was that pagan customs and beliefs were being integrated into Christian worship and beliefs. John's epistles are noted for his sharp distinctions between black and white. Things are either true or false, right or wrong, good or evil. He assumed his readers had a mature experience with God. While Paul's favorite characteristic words for the Christian life are faith, hope, and love, John's are light, life, and love.

2) L: "Now, let's examine the question, 'What does it say?' L: "Someone please read 2:1-6 for us."

a. L: "How would you title that section?" Knowledge of God or obedience to God's will.

b. L: "Let's examine verse 1. What is the importance of verse 1 to the epistle?" It is one of the reasons for John's writing the epistle.

c. L: "How do you feel about John's use of the term 'my little children!'" It is translated from teknia, a Greek diminutive term, expressive not of immaturity but of endearment. The same word is used in vv. 13 and 18.

d. L: "What is John's concern in V. 1?" That we may not sin, but if we do we have an Advocate.

e. L: "What is an advocate?" gr. Parakletos - advocate, undertaking another's cause. Pleader for another. Primarily a legal term. The help of anyone who lends his presence to a friend.

f. L: "What qualifications does 'Jesus Christ the righteous' have to do the task of advocate?" Jesus, the man, knows our humanity. Christ the righteous is God's anointed, He is uniquely acceptable to God.

g. L: "If anyone sins' is in the Greek aorist tense indicating a distinct act."

**OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

h. L: "In v. 2 what does propiation (expiation) mean?" Removal of defilement, to make reconciliation. Through the propiatory sacrifice of Christ, he who believes upon Him is by God's own act delivered from justly deserved wrath and comes under the covenant of grace.

i. L: "What do the words 'He is our propiation' connote?" The abiding results of His atoning sacrifice for our sins. His continuing present work.

j. L: "How does 'the whole world' apply to the unbeliever?" The only exclusion is on the part of those who will not avail themselves of it.

k. L: "Someone read John 14:21 to us and let's compare that verse with v.3."

l. L: "What does keeping 'His commandments' have to do with knowing Him and loving Him?" Devotion is realized in obedience. Keeping His commandments is a matter of holiness of life, moral conduct, walking in the light. Only so do we really know God and prove it to ourselves as well as Him.

m. L: "Compare 1:6 and 2:4. What similarities do you see in these verses?"

n. L: "In verse 5 'word' is translated from gr. logos which is the whole, of which His commandments are the parts. It is the complete Divine revelation. "According to this verse, how does keeping His word relate to love (agape)?" Refer back to John 14:21 and 1 John 4:10 and 11. The love of God is manifested in our heart and life in practical love toward God and our fellow man.

o. L: "How do you explain 'by this all know we are in Him'?" See John 14:20; 15:14; 17:10, 21, and 23. Enjoyment of fellowship with God and oneness with Him is His will and purpose. The spiritual relationship and unity of life with God. Not Pantheism which is a matter of absorption in Deity.

p. L: "What does 'abide' in v. 6 have to do with 'walk'?" The tense of as He 'walked' is aorist which is a single and complete view of the Lord's activity in the days of His flesh, and the life of the perfect fulfillment of the will of God. The words 'abide' and 'walk' connote a living present and continuing experience of the true believer.

3) L: "Now, let's summarize vv. 1-6 in terms of the question, 'What does it mean?'" The ultimate test of our pretensions and the best check on our spiritual condition is the plain test of deeds and obedience (v. 3) and walking in the way He walked (v. 6). Our obedience (manner of life) is a test of our pretended faith and true faith is the source of right conduct. (See also 3:7; Sermon on the Mount--- Matthew 7:17-21; Romans 2:6 & 13; and James 1:22- 27; 2:14-26.)

4) L: "To answer the question 'What does it mean to me?' I invite any of you to comment on how you would apply this portion of scripture to your own life."

5) L: "Someone please read vv. 7-11."

a. (What does it say?) L: "How would you title this section?" Love and the True Light.

b. L: "Reference v. 7, what is the 'old commandment'?" For the Christian all revelation is one, and God's disclosure of Himself in Christ is only the climax of what has gone before.

c. L: "What does 'beginning' refer to?" The beginning of their Christian lives and even greater the implication of the eternal precreative life of God.

**OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

d. L: "What does 'new commandment' refer to?" See Jesus' words (John 13:34). The essence of the old and new commandment is in 1 John 3:11.

e. L: "Someone read Romans 13:12. (reading) Can anyone relate that scripture to this one in terms of the true light?" The passing of the darkness of the old world (v. 17) is superseded by the person Word of God (John 1:9).

f. L: "What does v. 9 apply to?" Statements versus actions. Our deep seated feelings and resentments which are still present because of past hurts are a problem to our relationship with Christ.

g. L: "Someone read Psalms 66:18, Isaiah 59:2, and Proverbs 28:13."

h. L: "Do these verses provide the answer?"

i. L: "Someone read Acts 24:16 and 1 John 1:9."

j. L: "Do these verses provide the answer?"

k. L: "How do you define 'abiding in the light' in v. 10?" Living in Christ.

l. L: "What is the impact of v. 11?"

6) L: "What does this paragraph (vv. 7-11) mean?" The commandment (now singular) or Word, now takes on a new character in which the power of the Gospel over the world is becoming manifest. Beliefs and acts must be congruent in the believer's life.

7) L: "Would some of you please share what this scripture means to you?"

8) L: (wrap up with a discussion of vv. 11-14)

9) L: (close with step two, closing prayers)

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 JOHN 2: 12-17 & 18-28
Guide 3

TO THE LEADER: Remember, it is important to get others to lead the discussion. If you are the only one leading the discussion at this point, you will have to apply leadership to get someone else to lead the discussion. If you are the only one leading, you are in danger of establishing yourself as the guru of the group and no one else will lead. Remember a principle of spiritual growth is involvement.

THE CONTEXT: This epistle is a letter written by John the Apostle to the Christian community. He wrote it in the latter years of his life, about 90 A.D. because he was concerned about the effects of pagan customs on the Christian community. In chapter 1 he testifies of (1) his close personal relationship with Christ (vv 1&2) (2) the importance of Christian fellowship which is with God and Christ (vv 3&4), (3) the problem of the hypocritical Christian compared with a genuine Christian experience (vv 5-7), and (4) confession of sin as the answer to the problem of sin (vv 7- 10).

Thus far in Chapter 2 we have discussed: (1) The importance of avoidance of sin (v 1a), (2) Christ's role as advocate as a remedy for sin (vv 1b&2), (3) The proof of knowing God (vv 3-Sa), (4) How we know and abide in Christ (vv 5b-6), (5) Love as the proof of our living in Christ or abiding in the light (vv 7&8), and (6) The evidence of the profession of Christ as Lord, without the reality - both of one's brother or actual experience as love (vv 9- 11).

L: Let's now examine 2:12-17 from the standpoint of 'What does it say?' "Someone please read vv 12-17."

L: "How would you title this section?" Messages to: (1) fathers, (2) young men, and (3) little children.

L: "The term 'little children' of vv. 1,12 and 28 is translated from the Greek "teknia" which John uses as a term of endearment for the whole Christian community. The Greek, 'paidia', in vv 13 and 18 represents young converts. Thus, the three groups of focus for this scripture are based on both spiritual maturity and chronological age. Who are the three persons of focus in the three cases of maturity in verse 13?" Christ, Satan, and God (the Father).

L: "In v 14, what quality is associated with the spiritual strength of young men?" The Word of God abides...

L: "What is the meaning of 'abides'? Living with: a consistent state of staying with."

L: "What is the consequence of abiding in the Word (Bible)?" Overcoming the evil one (Satan). Generally, our bodily nature is sin. To abide in the Word (Bible) is to fill our minds with spiritual thoughts, thereby resulting in a renewed mind (See Romans 12:2).

L: "Verses 13 & 14 are repetitive with the minor change of 'I am writing' to 'I have written.' This is a Greek letter style in which the author projects himself from the time he is writing to the later time of the recipient's reading of the letter."

L: "What does 'you know' imply in terms of any relationship between two persons?" Knowledge gained - the fruit of experience. You 'know' as a result of having come to know.

L: "What level of spiritual conflict, i.e. good versus evil, experience would you impute to 'young men'?" At approximately the prime of life - sufficient experience in the spiritual conflict to successfully overcome or know victory in the conflict.

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

L: "What is the significance of the word 'overcome'?" It has a similar endurance quality such as abide and defeat.

L: "What quality (kind) of strength does the word 'strong' refer to in verse 14? Spiritual strength, persistence of commitment and depth of resolve.

L: "Is there an implication of relationship here between 'the Word of God abides in you' and being spiritually 'strong'?" Yes. See II Timothy 3:16 which refers to the value of scripture in teaching. Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10 are examples of Jesus using scripture to defeat Satan.

L: "Would someone please read 3:16 of the Gospel of John?" (Pause)

L: "Someone please read 1 John 5:19"

L: "Would someone summarize the apparent conflict of these two verses?" God and Satan are competing for people's hearts. L: "Considering 5:19, can you make a connection between overcoming the evil one in vv 13 & 14, his concern about love of the world in v 15 and Satan's power over the world stated in 5:19?" Satan has power in and over the world (John 12:31, 14:30 & 16:11).

L: "Verse 16 describes the aspects of the world that are alien to God but natural to the person who does not know God. What is lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and boastful pride of life?" Lust of flesh: man's primitive drives, animal impulses, and ancestral instincts unaffected by the love of God; the cravings of unregenerate man, including sins of flesh, worldly ambitions and selfish aims. (1 Peter 2:11, Ephesians 2:3). Example: living a life dominated by the senses; gluttonous in food; effeminate in luxury; slavish in pleasure; lustful and lax in morals; selfish in the use of possessions, regardless of God's commandments, judgment, standards, and existence; extravagant in the gratification of material desires. Lust of eyes: every variety of gratification by which sight is the instrument; love of beauty divorced from the love of goodness (Examples: Gen 3:6, Joshua 7:21, II Samuel 11:2). Pride of life: arrogance of vain glory related to external circumstances. (Examples - wealth, rank, dress, pretentious ostentation, the desire to shine or out-shine others in luxurious living).

L: "Can someone explain v 17, 'the world and its lusts are passing away'?" The world and all its people is temporal - only God and those He chooses are eternal. Every moment lived outside the realm of God is a part of a discreet or limited life consumed.

L: "Someone describe the qualities of the person who does the will of God." See Matthew 22: 35-39 - the greatest commandment. (Also, John 14:21, Matt. 12:50, John 1:12). The major quality of the person who does the will of God is love of God.

L: "Can someone summarize the message of verses 12 through 17?" The major factors of concern are forgiveness, knowledge of God, and the indwelling Word. Believers need to return to the truth they already know. Temptation involves the issue of ultimate devotion, whether to God or the world.

L: "How can we apply this passage now to our own lives?" 1. Be assured that if we believe the Word, repent of our sins, and confess, we are forgiven. 2. To overcome the evil one, we must abide in the Word - daily reading, meditation, moment by moment in thought. 3. Love God and not this world. 4. Recognize lust of the flesh and eyes, as well as feelings belonging to Satan.

****NOW WE PROGRESS TO DISCUSSION OF 2:18-28. CHECK TIME LEFT AND DETERMINE IF YOU WILL DISCUSS THIS SECTION NOW OR NEXT MEETING****

L: "Someone please read vv 18-28."

**OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

L: "How would you title this section?" The Deniers of the Faith; Truth and Falsehood.

L: "In v 18 'the last hour' refers to the temporal quality of life. Every hour outside of an eternal relationship with God is a potentially critical 'last hour.' Anti-Christ is the incarnation of the devil and evil, just as Christ is the incarnation of God and goodness."

L: "Someone please read Jude 17-19. Do you see the connection between the last hour and appearance of 'many antichrists'?"

L: "Verse 19 refers to an exodus of antichrists (false pretenders and teachers) from the Church. The phrase 'of us' is made clear by v 20. Those who had left had not received the 'Holy Spirit.' Verse 20 refers to the anointing of the Holy Spirit. "Someone read the words of John the Baptist in Mark 1:7&8 about the work of Jesus in a person's life." "Now someone else read John 1:12." "Someone else read the words of Christ in Revelation 3:20." "What does the last phrase of this verse imply?" Dining (eating or supping) with Jesus implies living the essence of life with Him. "What is a synthesis meaning of 20, Mark 1:7&8, John 1:12 and Revelation 3:20?" Salvation. Being born again spiritually. The open invitation of Christ to everyone.

L: "In reference to v 21, Titus 1:2 says God cannot lie. John 8:44 says lying springs from the Devil. Verse 22 is directed at those who would corrupt the faith through teaching pagan beliefs."

L: "What are the implications of v 23?" Jesus and God are a unity - you cannot deny one without denying the other.

L: "In verse 24, what is he referring to in 'what you have heard from the beginning?' Beginning - of Christ as messiah (savior, Lord). Actually, the whole of the Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Christ. The Good News of Christ was not yet distributed because the gospels were not distributed. Teaching was spread by word of mouth. Later, the errors John refers to in this epistle began to creep in.

L: "Reference v 25, the reward of living a life with Christ as Lord is eternal life. Verse 26 states the main purpose of this letter. What is the assurance of v 27?" If our relationship with God is true to His teaching in scripture (the Bible), we should not be led astray.

L: "In v 28, who would we shrink away?" Because we know that we have violated God's will in our lives.

L: "How would you summarize the meaning of verses 18-28?" Temptations to stray are rising because there are many more antichrists in the world. Return to the truth of the Word and abide in Christ. Eternal life is promised to the overcomer.

L: "How can I apply verses 18-28 to my life?" 1. Test all suspect information by the Word. 2. Abide in the Word in such a way as you will not shrink away when He comes. 3. Let the Holy Spirit lead you as you search out His truth.

OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 John 2: 28 -
Guide 4

I. 1 John 2: 28-3:3 - The children of God and the second coming of Christ.

a. What does it say?

(1) L: Someone read 1 Jn 2:28-3:3.

(2) L: What does "When He appears' (v. 28) refer to? The judgment seat of Christ (II Cor 5:10).

(3) L: What are the assurances of vs 2:20-3:3?

The confidence of the righteous (2:29);
The divine adoption (3:1);
and, the promise of the new creation (3:2)

(4) L: According to v. 29, how may we know we are born of him? The gr. root of 'does' marks the doing of righteousness as a habit. The practice of righteousness as a habitual trait is evidence of divine sonship (See Matt 7:21-23; Jn 1:9; Jn 17:25; 1 Jn 2:1; 1 Jn 4:7)

(5) L: Again, 1 Jn 3:1 refers to our adoption as children of God (Jn 1:12). Why does the world not know God? 'Knowing' connotes a relationship. The world cannot experience (know) God because it is evil by nature. Those of us who are made righteous by accepting Christ as Lord have His indwelling Spirit and therefore can know God. (Rev. 3:20)

(6) L: VV 3: 2,3 concern our hope for an after life. 1 Cor 13:12 indicates our perception of the after life. In 1 Jn 3:3, how do we 'purify' our selves? The purification is from everything that is inconsistent with the character and will of the Lord. The tense is the continuous present indicating the habit of resisting every defiling influence and keeping oneself free from it.

b. L: How would you summarize the meaning of 2:28-3:3? This is a plea for righteousness and consecration in preparation for the 2d coming of Christ. Ia(3) above gives the threefold assurance of those who must appeal before the judgment seat of Christ.

c. L: How would you apply this group of passages to your life? Test my relationship with Christ by an evaluation of my commitment to Him in terms of the righteous quality of my life. Ask myself, is there enough of Christ in my life so that the world does not know me - 1 Jn 3:1. Be committed to purifying myself as He is pure (1 Jn 3:3) by daily study of the Word and its application to my life, by walking/talking with God, by timely confession and repentance of sin (1 Jn 1:9).

II. 1 Jn 3: 4-10 - The children of God and the devil.

a. What does it say?

(1) L: Someone read 1 Jn 3: 4-10.

(2) L: Again, the tense of 'sons' in v. 4 is continuous present - habitual. What does lawlessness refer to? A state of anarchy against the kingdom of heaven.

**OFFICERS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

(3) L: In vv 5 and 6 John labels two identities. Name the two identities and identify the realm? The realm is a state of sin. The one who lives in Christ does not keep on sinning. The one who continues to sin has neither seen Him or known Him.

(4) L: vv 7 and 8 indicate we belong to one of two persons - either the devil or Christ. How do we tell who we belong to? By our actions, the quality of our life - beginning with our thoughts (Rom 12: 1,2).

(5) L: V. 9 indicates that the reason we do not sin is because we have been born of God. How can one be born of God? In Jn 3:1-21 Jesus explains to Nicodemus, a Pharisee (Jewish religious party - strict in obedience to the law of Moses and all extensions of the law) what being re-born means. Remember the gr. root of believe means to adhere to, rely on, and trust in.

(6) L: In 1 Jn 3:10, John adds a new test of whether I am a child of God. What is it? LOVE...see Matt 22:39, Jn 15:12, Romans 12:9, 1 Th 3:12, and 1 Pet 1:22, and Col 3:14.

b. Can someone summarize 1 Jn 3: 4-10 for us? Sin is anarchy - not of God but of the devil. Sin is incompatible with the person who is born of God. Matt. 7:17-18 is an analogy to the true Christian in terms of the fruit tree. The main thrust is the quality of the life of the Christian in terms of righteousness and love. We become new persons, are born-again, through the living and abiding Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

c. How should we apply this Scripture to our lives? By application of v. 6 - "live in Him" i.e. to apply His Word to my life, moment by moment, by commitment to Christ in the practice of righteousness, and by loving my neighbor as an act of will.

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NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 John 3:11 - 24
Guide 5

I. 1 Jn 3: 11-18

a. What does it say?

(1) L: Someone read 1 Jn 3:11-18

(2) L: How would you short title this section? Hate and Death in the World; Life and Love in the Faith. Notice how John has replaced righteousness and sin with love and hate.

(3) L: In vs. 11, 'from the beginning' refers to the beginning of the life as a Christian. This 'love' is the manifestation of the character of Christ in the believer. The 'should' refers to our ability to will to love. We love because we desire to be more like Christ.

(4) L: What is the spiritual meaning of vs. 12? The spiritual war that is waged in people - the two sides are righteousness versus evil or satan versus God. (See Gen 4 for the story of Cain and Abel). Cain's nature was evil. The righteousness of Abel (Heb 11:4) incited Cain's jealousy. Yet Cain had a choice (Gen. 4-7).

(5) L: In v. 13, why does the world hate Christians? Satan is the ruler, prince, of this world (Jn 12:31; 16:11; 2Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2). The unredeemed people of this world are under the power of satan and thus hate the Christian (Lk 6:22; Jn 15:19).

(6) L: Verse 14 gives a test that we may know that we have eternal life. What is it? Love (Jn 13:35) i.e., a life characterized by agape (gr. God's love) - unselfish, accepting, willed love; characterized by Christ.

(7) L: V. 15 gives a criterion test for the unredeemed - a quality of hate. What is hate? A continuing thought or feeling (Lev. 19:17 gives God's law. See also 1 Jn 2:9 and 4:20) By God's standards the thought is as serious as the act.

(8) L: V. 16 gives us a measure of the expected depth of our love. How can God expect this of us? Only by the power of the indwelling Christ. This quality of love indicates we surely have given up to this Lordship over our lives and we are living out our lives to glorify Him. (See Jn 15:13).

(9) L: In V. 17, what has my brother's need to do with my life? Fulfilling needs was a characteristic of Christ's earthly life as an example for us. Christ lives His life for the sake of others - so should we as He lives His life through us. We have the world's goods. The true test of love is not so much the laying

1 down of life as it is in moment by moment concern and compassion for others.

(10) L: In regard to verse 18, what do we call a person who says he loves but his life is not characterized by love? Hypocrite.

(11) L: What is the significance of 'commandment' and 'believe' in v. 23? Commandment is a requirement of God - there is no other way in His eyes. Any other way is sin. Believe means to adhere to, rely on, and trust in - the greatest depth of commitment. In a sense this is a restatement of Jesus' answer to the question, "what is the greatest commandment?" (Matt 22:36)

(12) L: According to v. 24, how do you explain this mysterious relationship of the indwelling Holy Spirit? If we truly accept Christ as Lord we obey His commands; He sends His Holy Spirit to abide in us. Those who have the Holy Spirit know it.

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NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDIES**

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

(13) L: How can you summarize the meaning of vv. 19-24? If the Holy Spirit abides in us we will know His love, joy, and peace. Our clear conscience will give us confidence before God and assurance of His concern for us as the perfect father He is.

(14) How can we apply this section to our lives? We should maintain a clear conscience before God, daily seeking His will and direction by study, prayer, and meditation. We must be obedient to the direction He leads us in.

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1 John 4
Guide 6

Someone read 1 John 4: 1-6.

How would you title this section? The false spirits and the Spirit of God.

What is the reason for John's warning (v.1)? See 1 Jn 2:18. There were those who tried to integrate their own beliefs into the church.

What religious confusion was possible even in the early church? People's unscriptural beliefs were integrated into the church.

Where did the false prophets come from? The world. Satan is the prince of this world (Jn 12:31, Matt 4:9, 1 Jn 5:19). Even Satan quoted scripture to try to influence Jesus (Matt 4:6 is quoted from Ps 91: 11,12) to do other than the will of God. This is why we must be familiar with scripture to be able to keep others from deceiving us.

What is the test by which one can distinguish the true prophet from the false (v.2)? Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ... See 1 Jn 1:7 concerning the significance of the blood of Jesus. See 1 Jn 4:15, 1:1, and John 1:1-4. Jesus is and was eternally with the Father. He is and always was God from the beginning. The Gnostics of John's day thought all matter was essentially evil. The incarnation of Christ, therefore, was denied by the false teachers who tried to assimilate Gnosticism into the Christian faith.

Why is denying the incarnation a serious matter? To deny Jesus was God incarnate is to deny Paul's statement about Christ (Gal 4:4,51) and Christ's statements about Himself (Matt 11:27, Lk 5:23,36; Jn 6:54-58).

How about those who never heard of God? See Ro 1:18-20.

What are the key points of vv. 3 and 4? If we confess Christ as Lord, He is in us. Those who do not confess Christ are not of God.

Do vv. 3-5 describe a continuum or a criterion? A criterion. You are either of Christ or of the world. In v.5, those of the world do not spiritually discern. The contemporary phrase, "Where are you coming from?" is applicable.

Do Christians communicate differently? See 1 Cor 2:12-16.

Someone summarize the meaning of vv. 1-6. We must become spiritually discerning. The root of spiritual discernment is Christ in us (the Holy Spirit abiding in us). One criterion of the Christian is the confession that Christ on earth was God incarnate. Christians communicate in a different plane than non-Christians. See John 16:5-15 concerning the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Someone read verses 7-16; someone else read 17-21.

Title for this section? God's love and ours. Love is used 43 times in this letter; 32 times in this section alone. In his essential nature, and in all things, God is loving.

What is the purpose of an atoning sacrifice (v.10)? God's holiness demands punishment for sins. This is substitutionary atonement to appease God's wrath over the believer's sins.

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In reference to V.12, has anyone ever seen God? Apparently the Israelites saw God (Ex 24:9-11), but no one can see God's true face and live (Ex 33:20), therefore, no. But what is the point of v.12? That we see God in those who love because God lives in them.

What is the significance of v.14? An eyewitness report. What is the significance of v.15? The importance of confessing Christ (Ro 10:10). What is the fear referred to in v.18? We have confidence that our salvation saves us from the punishment coming after the judgement. Genuine love confirms our salvation.

What is the significance of v.19? All love comes from God--it is not self-generated by creatures. God doesn't love us because we love Him, but vice versa. He loved us first.

What is the meaning of v.20? If you can't love one whom you see, how can you love one (God) you can't see. Blessed is the one who saw Jesus and believed, but even more so we who didn't see Jesus and believe.

How do we apply these verses to our lives?

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

1 John 5
Guide 7

Someone read 1 Jn 5:1-5.

What is a good short title for this portion of scripture? "Believers have victory over the world," etc.

What are the main points of this passage of scripture? 1. Whoever believes in Jesus as Messiah/Son of God is a child of God. 2. We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commands, etc.

Does anyone remember the complete meaning of "believe" according to the Greek use? "Adhere to, rely on, and trust in."

Therefore, "believe" has what connotation in terms of our relationship to Jesus as Messiah? Commitment to Him as Messiah (savior and Lord).

Someone please read John 14:15,21, and 23. Compare the content of those verses with 1 Jn 5:2,3. What are the differences?

How does Matt 22:36-39 fit with v.2?

How does Matt 11:29,30 fit with v.3b?

Look at v.4. What does it mean to "defeat the world?" To have victory over temptation and righteousness such that we do not turn away from God.

If v.4 is a true statement, what is the condition of the person who is defeated by the world? Lost.

How is it possible to defeat the world? See v.5. The person who is truly committed to Christ as Lord is the one who defeats the world.

How do you see vv.1-5 applying to our lives today? Someone read vv.6-12.

How would you short title this section? "The witness about Jesus Christ," etc.

What are the main points of this passage of scripture? How does John 15:26 fit with v.6?

Someone read Mark 1:8. How does this apply to this portion of scripture?

Someone read Acts 1:8. What relevance does this passage have on the scripture in 1 John 5:6-12, especially v.12? If we have Jesus as Lord, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit. . . that is really living. . . we have the very presence of God in our lives. . . and we will be witnesses because of his presence in our lives.

Someone read vv.13-15.

What are the main points here?

What is the main point of this scripture?

How does John 14:21 fit with this section? Jesus has promised to make himself known to us.

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

What does "according to his will" mean in v.14? If we truly have Christ as Lord, we will naturally do that which is righteous to please God. . . we will be in his will.

Someone read Rev 3:20.

The last portion of Rev 3:20 relates to the abiding presence of Christ in our lives through the Holy Spirit. Do you suppose that has anything to do with our living the life he has called us to live?

Someone read 1 Jn 5:16,17.

Now someone please read Heb 4:4-6 and Matt 10:33.

Do you think these verses apply to each other?

What is the sin that leads to death? I believe it is that mortal sin which becomes the state of a person who has listened to sin and refused to listen to God so often, that he loves his sin more than God. This essentially becomes the fulfillment of Matt 12:31.

The sin that does not lead to death is that sin that we confess and repent of. The problem in today's world is that everyone is willing to confess, but few are willing to repent.

Someone read 1 Jn 5:18.

How does this apply to our discussion of 16 and 17? This verse seems to imply that the child of God will not go on sinning. Remembering John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the children of God. . ." Do you suppose the "power to become" has something to do with how we reject sin?

V.18 says that "no child of God keeps on sinning. . ." Does this imply that if we keep on sinning (habitually) we are not a child of God?

What else is implied in this verse?

Someone read vv.19-21.

What are the implications of this portion of scripture?

What is the meaning of v.20?

What are some of the false gods of our world today? Profession. Security in investments, accomplishments, anything else we place before God in our lives.

What points have been made in this study that you think we should pay particular attention to?