

The book of
FIRST JOHN

Week of Monday, September 21, 2025

1 John 1:1-4

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— 3 what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Back in February, Christina and I were blessed to go to Israel, and I was overwhelmed. At first, it was simply because of the new surroundings. There were new sights, sounds, and smells. And because I love the Bible and history, being able to see these places was amazing.

But about halfway through the trip, something happened that affected me in a different way. We were standing at Caesarea Philippi, the place where Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." I had read those words countless times. I knew they were true. But standing there, looking at the same landscape Jesus and His disciples would have seen, I was overwhelmed by a truth that I had always believed but that suddenly felt much more tangible.

The words of Scripture reveal to us real events that happened in real places involving real people. Sometimes we read those words on the page and know they are true, but they can still feel somewhat abstract. But seeing the places where these events took place brought them a little closer to home for me. These weren't simply stories I had read. These things actually happened.

As John opens this first letter, he is testifying that he was even closer to the events he writes about. He tells us that what he is proclaiming is what he heard with his own ears, saw with his own eyes, and even touched with his own hands. John was there. He didn't experience Jesus from a distance. He encountered Him up close. And therefore, John isn't presenting Christianity as an abstract philosophy or a collection of good ideas. He's saying, in effect, We encountered Jesus.

The truth about Jesus that we find in Scripture is real. Our faith is built on something that actually happened. Jesus Christ came into the world. He was heard, seen, and touched. John and the other apostles weren't passing along a theory; they were proclaiming what they had personally witnessed.

Now, we haven't seen Jesus in the same way John did, but our faith rests on the testimony of those who did. And throughout 1 John, John is going to keep bringing us back to the reality of Jesus and what it means to know Him. In fact, near the end of the letter, he tells us why he wrote: "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

So our goal of this series isn't simply that we know more about the book of 1 John. John wants us to know God more deeply, walk more closely with Him, and experience the fellowship we have with His people because we belong to Him. And that gives us something to think about as we begin. If Jesus is truly who John says He is, what difference should that reality make in my life? It is possible to believe that Jesus really lived, really died, and really rose again and yet live as though those truths are distant from our everyday lives. John doesn't give us room to do that. The Jesus he proclaims is not merely someone to believe facts about; He is someone to know and follow with our lives.

Over the coming weeks, John will call us to walk in the light, confess our sin, obey Christ, love one another, remain in the truth, resist the world, and have confidence that we belong to God. These aren't disconnected commands. They are what life begins to look like when the reality of Jesus moves from something we believe in our minds to someone we know and follow with our lives.

My prayer as we begin this series is that we won't simply come to know 1 John better. I pray that through the truth John proclaims, we will know Jesus better.

-Devotional written by Jason McDonald

Read Also:

1 John 1

John 1:1–18 — John identifies Jesus as the eternal Word who became flesh and lived among us.

Luke 1:1–4 — Luke explains why he carefully recorded Jesus' story.

John 20:24–31 — John explains that his Gospel was written so we might believe and have life in Jesus.

Acts 4:1–22 — Peter and John testify boldly about what they have seen and heard concerning Jesus.

2 Peter 1:16–21 — Peter emphasizes that the apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty.

John 15:9–17 — Jesus describes a relationship with Him as abiding in Him with fullness of joy.

1 John 5:9–13 — John explains that his purpose is for believers to know they have eternal life.

Group Discussion Questions

What stands out to you about the way John describes Jesus in 1 John 1:1–4? What do we learn from his repeated references to hearing, seeing, observing, and touching? Why do you think John places such emphasis on the fact that he and the other apostles personally encountered Jesus?

John says that he is proclaiming what he has seen and heard "so that you may also have fellowship with us." What does Christian fellowship mean, and how is our fellowship with one another connected to our fellowship with God?

Verse 4 says that John is writing so that his readers' joy may be complete. What connection do you see between knowing Jesus and experiencing genuine joy?

It is possible to believe that Jesus is real and still live as though He is distant from our everyday lives. What are some ways we can unintentionally do this?

As we begin this study, what do you most want God to teach you or change in you through 1 John?

John's stated purpose at the end of the letter is that believers may "know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Why do you think assurance is important to the Christian life, and what would it look like for you to live with greater confidence in what Christ has done for you?