

Finding A Child-Like Faith

A Study in 1 John

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1



Jesus caught people off guard when we said, *"unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 18:3) How can we re-discover what it is like to build a trusting relationship like a young infant has to a parent?

What does God promise us here and in the future if we capture the essence of living out of child-like wonder in our walk with Jesus? The book of 1st John challenges us to discover the joy of launching ourselves into waiting arms of Jesus!

September 4	1 John 1:1-4	Taking the First Steps with God
September 11	1 John 1:5-2:2	A Hero Worth Following
September 18	1 John 2:3-11	A Community that Loves You
September 25	1 John 2:12-17	A Promise To Hold On To
October 2	1 John 2:18-29	A Teacher Who Can Be Trusted
October 9	1 John 3:1-10	A Faith Worth Modeling
October 16	1 John 3:11-24	An Action Louder Than Words
... All Church Potluck, 11 am		
October 23	1 John 4:1-6	A Warning To Listen To
October 30	1 John 4:7-21	A Truth That Transforms You!
... NewDay Next Steps, 11 am		
November 6	1 John 5:1-13	A Hope that Inspires Us
November 13	1 John 5:14-21	A Future Waiting For You
... Baptism Sunday! (During the Worship Service)		

Taking the First Steps with God



READ & OBSERVE: 1 John 1:1-4

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.

Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³ And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Why did Jesus use this real life metaphor, *"unless you CHANGE and BECOME like a child"*, as one of the key factors in a life-long relationship with him?

What are the most important needs a child has during the early stages of life?

REFLECT & INTREPRET: Today... Focus is on those who have actually BEGAN their walk with God and those who are still sitting or just pretending to. Just calling yourself a follower of Jesus (a Christian) does NOT mean that you are one.

What ARE the first steps in a relationship with Jesus really like?

What were the reasons John wrote this letter?

- 1 John 1:3 – So that we can have FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER
- 1 John 2:1 – So that you will not continue in a PATTERN of SIN
- 1 John 5:13 – So that you can KNOW you have ETERNAL LIFE!

10 Spiritual Tests of A Genuine Relationship with Jesus

RESPOND / APPLICATION: Two key questions that separate Posers, fakers, and wannabes from authentic followers of Jesus

- 1. The Basic Morality question: Am I walking...
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(1 John 1:6-7, Galatians 5:19-21, Matthew 5:14-16, John 3:19-21, Ephesians 5:8-16, 2 Peter 1:3-11)

- 2. The Spiritual Humility question: Do I see myself...
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(1 John 1:8 ,2:2, Romans 3:23, 5:6-10, 6:23, 7:14-25, Galatians 2:21)

DIGGING DEEPER THIS WEEK...

- 1. John's big picture purposes for writing 1 John were to widen the circle of people who shared fellowship with him and with the Lord (1 John 1:3-4) and to make it easier to tell the difference between a spiritual fraud and a genuine Christian (1 John 5:13).

It's important to note that he equates fellowship with other Christians as a key by-product of genuine fellowship with God. Yet despite the importance of being in good relationships with other Christians, we sometimes find ourselves isolated and withdrawn from both God and other Christians. Read what the writer of the book of Hebrews says about combating tendencies toward isolation.

Hebrews 3:12-14
Hebrews 10:24-26

What is the best way for someone to encourage you spiritually and the best way for you to personally stay connected to others?

- 2. How do you think the average person on the street would respond to the idea that God is ALL good?

- 3. What beginning steps do you want to make with Jesus this week?

Take some time to think about the following quote...
Your ordinary self is exactly where God wants to work extraordinary miracles. The inconspicuous nobody who shivers when it's cold and sweats when it's hot, who wakes up so many days feeling not-at-all-ready to face the world, who can barely get dressed and show up on time and at the right place, who has to read the paragraph three times to understand it, who feels lonely and hopeless, isolated, crowded, horny, left out, and taken in all at once - YOU are the one God loves! Deal with it.

Posers, Fakers, and Wannabes (Unmasking the Real You) Brennan Manning

