

How Do You Know God's Your Father?



Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

4minute
BIBLE STUDIES

How Do You Know God's Your Father?

Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

HOW DO YOU KNOW GOD'S YOUR FATHER?

PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB). © Copyright The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Italics in Scripture quotations reflect the author's added emphasis.

ISBN 978-0-307-45762-2

Copyright © 2001 by Precept Ministries International

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House Inc., New York.

WATERBROOK and its deer colophon are registered trademarks of Random House Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

2009

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SPECIAL SALES

Most WaterBrook Multnomah books are available at special quantity discounts when purchased in bulk by corporations, organizations, and special-interest groups. Custom imprinting or excerpting can also be done to fit special needs. For information, please e-mail SpecialMarkets@WaterBrookMultnomah.com or call 1-800-603-7051.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning more about what the Bible says, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mother's group meeting in a home, or a smaller Sunday-school class. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time, while you're together*.

However, you'll need a facilitator to lead the group—someone to keep the discussion moving. (This person's function is *not* that of a lecturer or teacher. However, when this book is used in a Sunday-school class or similar setting, the teacher should feel free to lead more directly and to bring in other insights in addition to those provided in each week's lesson.)

If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you as a leader choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.
- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson,

including the “insight boxes,” which may appear either before or after the instructions or in the midst of your observations or discussion. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.

- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remember the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.
- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week’s lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week’s discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don’t want to slow the pace too much. It’s much better to leave everyone “wanting more” than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Really *read* the Scriptures, asking God to show everyone His answers.

HOW DO YOU KNOW GOD'S YOUR FATHER?

During Jesus' ministry He turned to some religious leaders and said, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). What an affront that must have been to men who thought they had God as their father.

What does a genuine Christian look like? Have you ever wondered? And what about you? Are you a Christian? Do you know you are going to heaven? Or can a person know for sure?

We have often counseled people who are struggling with doubts about their relationship with God. It is a miserable way to live—always wondering, always hoping, but never certain. They have no joy, no peace, no confidence—only anguish.

With eternity hanging in the balance, you need to know where you stand with God. In other words, who's your father—God or the devil?

For the next six weeks we will study 1 John together and seek answers to this question. Sometimes the truth will excite you, sometimes you will praise God for revealing Himself to you, and sometimes the truth will make you uncomfortable. Very uncomfortable. The truth does that. But please don't quit; the truth will also set you free.

WEEK ONE

One of Jesus' disciples, John, wrote five of the books in the Bible. One of them, a letter known as 1 John, was written to answer our question: "How do you know God's your Father?" We'll begin our study by letting John tell us exactly why he wrote this letter.

OBSERVE

Leader: Read aloud 1 John 1:1-4; 2:1-2,26; and 5:13, reprinted for you in the sidebars on pages 3-5.

- Underline the words **write**, **writing**, or **written** with a squiggly line like this:



Have the group say aloud the words they are marking. This way no one will miss marking the word. Do this throughout the study.

DISCUSS

- Look at each place you have marked the word *write*. According to these verses, why is John writing this letter? What are the reasons he gives?

1 JOHN 1:1-4

¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1 JOHN 2:1-2

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

- What's the last reason John gives in 1 John 5:13?

- Why do you think it was important that his readers know that they have eternal life?

- What does 1 John 5:13 tell you about eternal life? So many people say you won't know if you'll get into heaven until you stand before God and He weighs the good against the bad. According to 1 John 5:13, is that true?

1 JOHN 2:26

These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

1 JOHN 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 JOHN 1:1-3

¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

OBSERVE

Leader: Read aloud 1 John 1:1-3 again.

This time instruct the group to mark...

- every reference to the **author** by putting a box around every **we** and **our**:
- **the Word of Life** (which is a reference to Jesus Christ) and any other synonyms with a cross: **+**

DISCUSS


- What do you learn about John from marking references to *we* and *our*?
- What do you learn from marking the references to *Jesus Christ*, the Word of Life?
- Why do you think John is telling this to the recipients of this letter? What would this information do for them? Does it mean anything to you?

OBSERVE


Leader: Read 1 John 1:5-10. Have the group say aloud and mark:

- every reference to **God** (including **Him**, **He**, and **His**) with a triangle, like this:



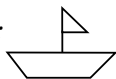
- every reference to **Jesus Christ** with a cross: 

Now read through the text again and mark:

- every occurrence of **darkness** and **light**. Circle both words, then put a slash through darkness, like this: 
- the word **sin(s)** by drawing a large **S** over it.

Read through 1 John 1:5-10 once more. This time have the group mark:

- every **we** and **us** with a box.
- **fellowship**, like this:

**INSIGHT**

The Greek word for *fellowship* is *koinonia*, which means “to share in common.” Someone has said, “It’s two fellows in the same ship!”

1 JOHN 1:5-10

⁵ This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking *God*?
- What do you learn from marking *fellowship*?
- What two things are true, according to verse 7, if we walk in the light?
- If you have sin, how are you to deal with it? (Look at the places you marked *sin* with an **S**.)
- What happens if I confess my sin? What two things does God do if I confess my sins?