

## Small Group Discussion Questions - Fall Semester // WeekOne

*Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.*

### Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) How has September been for you so far? As you settle into your new schedule (work, school, etc.), what have been a few of the 'highs' and 'lows'?
- b) Over the summer, what is something that you learned in your personal relationship with God? Whether it was at church, in a book, or in your personal devotions, what is one area of your faith where you grew this summer?

### Passage and Discussion

#### **Read 1 John 1:1-4**

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) Have you read through 1 John before? How would you describe or summarize this book in the Bible? What are a few notable passages/themes that you remember from this book?
- c) As we begin our new series on being "Set Apart", why do you think it is important for Christ-followers to be "set apart" from the world around them? What are a few ways that you describe what it means to be "set apart"?
- d) The series we began this week is specifically entitled *Set Apart Together*. How does community enable us to live out our calling as Christians, in ways that we cannot by ourselves?
- e) Count the number of 'plural pronouns' in these first 4 verses. What does the presence of these plural pronouns say about the nature of the Johannine community, and by extension, the nature of the church? When you think of church, do you think of it in terms of a 'plurality' of people, or do you think about your experience of church on individualistic terms?
- f) In **verse 1**, John describes everything in the book as "that which we have heard, seen, looked at, and touched". Why is it important that we are learning from other Christ-followers as we grow in our faith? How are we able to teach others by sharing our experiences and testimony?
- g) In **verse 3**, John makes a simple, but powerful statement - because of the truth in this book, we are able to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son. In a few words, what does it

mean to you have to have “fellowship with the Father and with His Son”? Why do you think we so often forget the amazing grace of the access we have to God? How can we remind ourselves about this truth?

- h) What does “fellowship with the Father and with His Son” look like for you, especially during this season? How do we maintain intimacy with God, even as we socially-distance from other people in our lives?
- i) In **verse 4**, John says “we write this to make our joy complete”. Why is sharing truth so important in a “set apart” community? How does walking in the truth together make our joy complete in Christ?
- j) **Read John 9:1-34** (if you have time). What stands out to you about the ‘aftermath’ of this man’s encounter with Christ? What thoughts, questions or feelings come to mind, as you read through this account?
- k) In the **John 9** passage, we read about a common experience of many of those within the Johannine community - and the necessity for its origin. Why do you think it’s important for us to understand where this community comes from? How does its beginnings help us understand the context of 1 John?
- l) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging? Did you learn anything about the Psalms that you didn’t know before?

### **Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)**

- a) This week, take a few minutes to consider what you can share with others - do you have a friend or family member with whom you can share your testimony; that which you have “heard, seen, looked at, and touched” in your faith?
- b) This week, take a few minutes to watch The Bible Project’s summary video of 1 John on YouTube. It gives a helpful overview of 1 John, the structure of the book, and the major themes. The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3QkE6nKyIM>

### **Optional Ideas for Prayer Time**

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to ‘check-in’ about how each person is doing, and pray for them.
- b) As a group, spend a few minutes praying for this new series that we are walking through as a church. Pray that God would use it to help each of us become more like Him, and to help our church become more like the community He wants us to be.