

Small Group Guide: Life Made Visible

The Real Thing: Week 1

1 John 1:1-2:2

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help members honestly examine their faith and walk with Him.

Icebreaker Question

What's the most obvious "counterfeit" or "fake" product you've ever encountered? How did you figure out it wasn't genuine?

Sermon Overview

This week we began a new series on 1 John called "The Real Thing." The Apostle John wrote to believers who were confused by false teachers making competing claims about Jesus, salvation, and Christian living. John's central question: **How can you know that your faith is real?**

Key Takeaways

1. Life Was Revealed

- Jesus is eternal - He existed "from the beginning"
- Jesus became visible - John heard, saw, and touched Him
- Jesus is proclaimed - So others can have fellowship with God and experience complete joy

2. Light Must Be Walked

- God is light with no darkness in Him
- Genuine believers walk in the light, not in darkness
- Walking in the light means: living honestly before God, responding to His truth, and aligning our lives with His will

3. Grace Must Be Trusted

- When we sin, Jesus is our advocate before the Father
 - Jesus is our propitiation (atoning sacrifice) who satisfied God's wrath
 - Our hope rests on Christ's righteousness, not our performance
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read 1 John 1:1-4.** Why does John emphasize that he personally heard, saw, and touched Jesus? How does this eyewitness testimony strengthen our confidence in the Christian faith?
2. **What does it mean that "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all" (verse 5)?** How does this truth about God's character affect how we should live?
3. **John addresses three false claims in this passage (verses 6, 8, 10).** What are they, and why is each one dangerous to genuine faith?

Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon stated: "Spiritual maturity is not pretending that we have arrived... it's becoming increasingly honest about our need for Jesus."** On a scale of 1-10, how honest are you with God about your struggles and failures? What makes honesty difficult?
5. **What's the difference between "walking in the light" and being sinless?** Share an example of what "walking in the light" looks like in everyday life.
6. **When you sin, is your first instinct to run TO God or AWAY FROM God?** What does your answer reveal about how you view God's character?

Application

7. **John says genuine believers "confess" their sins rather than deny them.** Is there an area of sin in your life that you've been minimizing, excusing, or hiding? (You don't need to share specifics, but consider what God might be revealing to you.)
 8. **The sermon emphasized that Jesus is our "advocate" when we fail.** How does knowing you have an advocate change the way you approach God after you've sinned?
 9. **"Fellowship with God produces a changed way of living."** What's one specific area where your fellowship with God has produced change in your life? What's one area where you still need transformation?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to focus on this week:

Daily Practice

- **Morning Examination:** Each morning this week, ask God: "Search me and reveal any area where I'm not walking in the light."
- **Confession Journal:** Keep a simple journal where you honestly confess sin to God and record His faithfulness to forgive.

Accountability

- **Find a Partner:** Identify one person in the group you can text this week when you're struggling with a specific sin or temptation.
- **Check-In Question:** "This week, did I run TO God or AWAY FROM God when I failed?"

Scripture Memorization

Memorize **1 John 1:9**: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Honest Assessment

Complete this sentence and share with one trusted person: "One area where I need to stop hiding and start walking in the light is..."

Closing Reflection

Read 1 John 2:1-2 together as a group.

The pastor said: "When we fail, we run to Christ, not away from Him."

- What would change in your life if you truly believed Jesus is your advocate?
 - How would your relationship with God be different if you fully trusted His grace?
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Prayer Prompts

Close your time by praying for one another in these areas:

1. **Confession:** That we would have courage to be honest about our sin
 2. **Assurance:** That we would trust Christ's advocacy and sacrifice for us
 3. **Transformation:** That we would genuinely walk in the light this week
 4. **Fellowship:** That our relationships with God and each other would deepen
 5. **Joy:** That we would experience the complete joy that comes from walking with Jesus
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Before Next Week

- Read 1 John 2:3-17 in preparation for next week's study
 - Practice daily confession and walking in the light
 - Reach out to your accountability partner at least once
 - Come ready to share one way God worked in your life this week
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Leader Notes

- Create a safe environment for honest sharing about struggles with sin
- Emphasize grace throughout the discussion - this passage is about hope, not condemnation
- Be prepared to share your own struggles with walking in the light
- If someone shares about serious ongoing sin, follow up individually after the meeting
- Remind the group that confession to God brings forgiveness; we don't earn it through performance