

## THRIVING TOGETHER SMALL GROUPS

*Exploring Scripture – Discovering Truth – Knowing Jesus – Living Connected*

**Sept 22, 2025**

As you begin today's discussion, spend about 2 minutes checking in with one another about the past week living as children of God. What types of challenges did they face? What encouragement did they experience? How can the group pray for them?

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**Know the context for 1<sup>st</sup> John:** When 1<sup>st</sup> John was written, around AD 85-95, as the shepherd of the young flock of Christians, the Apostle John implored the early church lovingly to i) establish their identity as the children of God, ii) to know the truth, iii) know why they can rely on what he had written, iv) to know that sin was not to be lifestyle and that it was important to reconcile with God through confession of sin and repentance, and v) he warned them of the growing deception of false teaching and the reality of being led astray from the truth of Jesus. Gnosticism was gaining influence and was infiltrating the early church, leading to confusion and division. They propagated teaching that Jesus was not actually human and that secret knowledge was the path to salvation. John, instead reminded the church that, based on faith in Jesus being God in human flesh, who came to lay down His life so that we may receive the gift of salvation and eternal life, we are the children of God. Additionally, John's insistence on the incarnation of Jesus (1 John 1:1-4), the need for confession of sin (1 John 1:9), and the call to live in the light were directly correcting what Gnostic teachings were communicating. Further, the early church fathers (e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian) defended the foundational tenets of following Jesus as Christians: the incarnation of Christ, the reality of sin, and the need for genuine fellowship with God.

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### **Scripture Segments: 1 John 2:18-27 & 1 John 4:1-6**

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1. Based on the two passages we read, how can we be led astray with false teaching (antichrists and false prophets) as Christians today?
  - a. Talk about what makes a teaching false based on Scripture.
  - b. Why is this important? (Read also 1 Peter 5:8)
2. In what ways can we test and discern what is truth and what is error/lies, as John describes? Read also 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

3. From the Scripture portions we read, share who the Holy Spirit is and the role He plays in the lives of the children of God. How do you rely on the Holy Spirit?
4. Across these passages as well as across the entire letter of 1<sup>st</sup> John, we see these phrases:
  - a. "Need to know" - 1 John 2:26
  - b. "how we know" - 1 John 4:2, 6
  - c. "all of you know the truth" - 1 John 2:20
  - d. because you know - 1 John 2:21
5. Think about your life as a Christian. Based on what you have learned in the reading as well as the discussions this week as well as the previous weeks:
  - a. Where has your view of God perhaps been out of line with how He has revealed himself in Scripture?
  - b. What changes will you need to make to embrace (receive and practice) the biblical view?

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### **Practical Application:**

Ask the Lord to give you the desire to know the Scripture we have in the Bible.

Take a step to be a child of God who prepares and knows God's truth in the Bible.

Perhaps note where you may be hearing something that is not true about Jesus or how we ought to live as children of God that might be questionable.

Pray and ask God to challenge you to know Him better and more deeply by reading the Bible and practicing the truth you glean. Be willing to share what you read and learned when you gather together next week.

What would you want to know about the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?