



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Series Theme: Life, Light, Love; A Series on 1 John
Text for the Week: John 1:1-4
Message for the Week: The Words of Life

Week One
Sunday, September 11

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What is your favorite early childhood memory from when you were 10 years old or younger?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [1 John 1:1-4](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

Why do you think Eugene Peterson says the two most difficult things to get straight in our lives are *love* and *God*? Do you agree with him? What makes getting *love* and *God* straight so difficult?

Do you have a healthy (authentic) relationship with Jesus? How do you know? What makes for a healthy relationship?

Why is firsthand experience with Jesus so important?

Why is an authentic experience with Jesus a key component to our witness? What happens when we try and witness about Jesus without an authentic experience?

If spiritual authority comes only with an authentic lifelong walk with Jesus, do you have spiritual authority? How do you know?

Pastor Doug notes for us that "a follower of Jesus will enjoy life based on how big their sense of God is, how well they know him, and how much they're willing to give up to follow him." How enjoyable is your life?

"Try It!"

Find something your entire family/household enjoys doing and do it together. No electronic devices allowed.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father, we acknowledge our world is a mess and that all too often we have allowed the world to impact our faith rather than our faith impacting the world. Father, give us a sense of urgency for the Truth, for Jesus, for the Gospel, for growing in love, for the Harvest. Mark our lives with an authenticity that comes only from being with Jesus, an authority marked by faithfulness, an assurance from knowing the Truth, the affection of being loved by you and your community, and a complete abandonment to you and your mission. In Jesus' name – our life, light, and love - we pray. Amen.

Missional/Spiritual Practice for the Month: Cultivating Loving Kindness

During the month of September, you are encouraged to cultivate loving-kindness, well-being, happiness, and peace toward ourselves and others. Speaking words of blessing out loud or inwardly does more than reflect our thoughts— they shape our feelings and behaviors. Each day receive and extend loving kindness. Take a few moments to quiet yourself. When you feel a sense of calm, begin by repeating the following blessing, giving the words time to resonate in your heart and mind: "May I be blessed with loving kindness. May I be blessed with health. May I be blessed with true happiness. May I be blessed with peace."

When your heart feels full of loving compassion - move from yourself to those around you, family, friends, co-workers, those who have hurt you. Visualize each person as you pray this blessing on them: "May they be blessed with loving kindness. May they be blessed with health. May they be blessed with true happiness. May they be blessed with peace."