

# Bible Studies for Life: September 5

*Sure of Forgiveness • 1 John 1:5-2:2*

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This year's January Bible Study was entitled, *John's Epistles: Living with Assurance*, published by LifeWay. In God's schedule, it's time to look at John's Epistles again. Why?

Perhaps the reason has to do with what Paul told the Corinthians: "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test" (2 Cor. 13:5-6 ESV).

The disciple John, whom Jesus loved (John 13:23), is attributed as the writer of the New Testament epistles that bear his name. Writing to believers, his emphasis is on right doctrine regarding who Jesus is.

He was also addressing the Gnostics who claimed to be enlightened; they believed they could live a level of perfection on earth. John was giving them a test because they didn't recognize their sin. (They failed!)

Also, John's words of authority were written to encourage readers to evaluate their salvation in Jesus and obedience to Him. In other words, go back to the basics of Christianity!

We must therefore begin with the issue of sin. When Adam and Eve chose to sin, God provided a way to bridge the divide between sinful man and a holy, righteous God from the beginning (Genesis 3:15). Jesus, the Word of Life (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1), bridged the divide. He was made manifest to us, not hidden, providing fellowship with Him.

**We are forgiven when we turn from darkness to light (1 John 1:5-7).** In the Gospel of John and his Epistles, we see the contrastive themes of light and darkness. Who is God? God is light! "Light" represents biblical truth, while "darkness" represents error or falsehood.

Jesus told the adulterous woman, "I am the light of the World. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12 NKJV). This is the message John and the disciples heard and proclaimed concerning the Word of Life.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed" (John 3:19-20 CSB).

God's plan requires that an individual make a clear, conscious decision to repent (turn) and believe in Him. Will it be fellowship with Jesus, or living in darkness? Scripture is clear. It's Light or darkness, not both. When a person chooses Jesus, they receive complete forgiveness.

The conditional word, "if," is used throughout the focal passage. First, we may say we have fellowship with Jesus – but we lie if we walk in darkness and do not practice the truth. A true believer's life is to be different from the world.

The benefit of walking in the Light, as He is in the light, is that we have fellowship with Him and with one another. Why? Because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

**We are forgiven when we confess our sin.** Have you ever asked a person if they have sinned? One answer might be, “No, I’m a good person; I don’t do bad things.” Therein is the problem. When we say we have not sinned, we are deceiving ourselves and proving the truth is not in us.

However, God gives us this promise in verse nine: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (NKJV).

Jesus paid the penalty for all our sins, declaring us justified and wholly forgiven.

**We are forgiven when we depend on Jesus as our Advocate (1 John 2:1-2).** John is writing from the heart of a shepherd. “Little children” shows his love and desire for them to grow in truth and faith.

He also reminds them that we have an Advocate in Jesus Christ. Standing in our place, He paid the penalty of sin for us on the cross. He became the atoning sacrifice, once and for all. The word “propitiation” also means atoning sacrifice. This word is also used by Paul in Romans 3:25, referring to the work of Jesus on cross. He paid for the sins of the entire world.

Life Action Revival Ministries offers the First John Project. A download is available at: <https://lifeaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/firstjohnproject-bw.pdf>. Don’t delay; take the test and be sure of forgiveness and genuine salvation found only in Jesus. It’s the most important test you will ever take!

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