Jesus and the Johannine Letters

Surveying the Source
1 John; 2 John; 3 John; Rom. 8:32–34; 1 John 4:1–4, 20.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand the reality of spiritual light and darkness in everyday life.
► Be able to identify characteristics of love in God and others.
► Participate in an act of love for someone else in the church or community.

Preparing to Lead
“Christ’s church is going to be made up of some who were blind, some who were lepers, some who were demon possessed. . . . In the end all these people will have one common denominator, that they all love other people as much as they love themselves. . . . This type of love cannot be manufactured by us, cannot be faked, and is utterly worthless when pretended in public. . . . Don’t point to your church affiliation, because church affiliation is not enough. . . . Only those who are like their Master in words, actions, and motivations will at last be saved because they have learned to love without an ‘if’.”

Getting Started
A. On pieces of gray paper, write actions, attitudes, and particularly motives that reflect light and darkness. Examples might be found in texts such as 1 John 2:10, 11 and current news. Hide these throughout the classroom for students to find later, or tape one paper under each chair. Place the white and black containers in the middle of the room. Begin with prayer, and read 1 John 2:9–11. Encourage students to think about light and dark comparisons. Have them find the slips of paper. Take turns reading each paper and discussing which container it should be placed in.

B. Make an obstacle course/maze with chairs and other items. (Keep safety in mind.) When members arrive, choose several volunteers. Turn out lights, blindfold, and twirl volunteers. Instruct blindfolded members to proceed through the maze. When completed, have extra class members lead them to the beginning, keeping blindfolds on. With their backs to the maze, put a plate of cookies at the end, turn on the lights, and take off the blindfolds. Tell volunteers to turn around, and go through the maze, “seeing in the light”— receiving their reward! (There should be enough cookies for all.)

Delving Into the Word
A. Read the following quotation to the class: “The mark of Cain is the spirit of control, of commanding, and ruling over others. The mark of Cain compels; it uses
force, pressure, persecution, and intimidation. . . . Today in the church, in all the churches, there is an epidemic of such violence. No, we don’t literally slay our brothers and sisters. . . . We slay them with the tongue. We talk about them, destroy their reputations, spread gossip, and are just as murderous in our sphere of influence as was Cain so long ago. . . . We set out to destroy them precisely because we can’t control them.”2

Ask the class if and how they agree or disagree with this quote. Have members of the class read 1 John 3:11–15 and 3 John 9, 10. Make two columns on a whiteboard. Compare the attitudes that drove Cain to murder, with those apparently motivating Diotrephes. List them in each column. Apply those motives to self-examination and specific situations class members face today.

Discuss 3 John 11 and other Johannine texts that offer specific guidance to counteract loveless motives. Next to each evil trait, list a godly motive with scriptural support that Christians should cultivate in their personal lives.

B. Say: “Within the three small Johannine letters, there are 53 references to the concept of love. Unmistakably, love is a theme John wished for his audience to grasp. The largest concentration of those references can be found in 1 John 4:7 to 1 John 5:3. As Christ’s disciples today, how can we comprehend the width and depths of love, not only in and from God, but in and through others and ourselves?” (Solicit answers.)

Distribute a copy of the activity on page 31 to each class member. Examine in small groups or as a whole 1 John 4:7 to 1 John 5:3. The first example has been completed.

1. What might it mean to love without an “if”?
2. How can you know if you are living in the light rather than in the darkness?
3. What are some of the rewards of living in the light?
4. Have you ever personally experienced slaying by the tongue? If so, are you comfortable sharing it with the class?
5. Is it possible to love someone who is clearly of the devil? If not, why not? If so, how?
6. What is the greatest hindrance in our lives that prevents us from loving another person?
7. Who in your life needs to feel your love in action?

1. What might it mean to love without an “if”?
2. How can you know if you are living in the light rather than in the darkness?
3. What are some of the rewards of living in the light?
4. Have you ever personally experienced slaying by the tongue? If so, are you comfortable sharing it with the class?

Closing the Activity

Prior to class, collect information from church leadership and/or community representatives on specific ways your class could help needy individuals in a tangible way. Read together 1 John 3:16–18. Discuss ways in which members can “lay down” their lives for others. End with a brainstorming session on specific needs members are aware of in the church and the community. (Examples might be: yard work for an elderly person; meals to someone having just given birth to a baby; writing thank you notes to people seldom recognized for their service; or washing the car of a physically disabled person.) Choose one project enabling the class to demonstrate their love not only “in word,” but also “in deed.” Stress the importance of making such actions a part of one’s life.

Lisa Poole, Elbert, Colorado, U.S.A.

2. Ibid., pp. 50, 51.
The Essence of Love
Read 1 John 3 through 1 John 5:3.
List, with references, what these texts teach about love in relation to God, others, and ourselves. One example of each has been completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Ourselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 John 3:1—<em>God’s love is abundant. His love actually amazes logic.</em></td>
<td>1 John 3:10—<em>A person may be of God or of the devil. Love is one of the two obvious measures for making this determination.</em></td>
<td>1 John 3:14—<em>I am not fully alive or living when I do not love others.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 2

Experiencing the Word of Life

Surveying the Source

Deut. 4:1–4; 1 Cor. 15:1–8; 1 John 1:1–5; Rev. 19:13.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Plan their own individual private devotional time.
► Share the results of their personal devotional time.
► Understand how devotional time affects daily life.

Preparing to Lead

“The lesson that in helping others we ourselves receive help must be urged upon young believers continually, by precept and example, that in their Christian experience they may gain the best results. Let the desponding ones, those disposed to think that the way to eternal life is trying and difficult, go to work to help others. Such efforts, united with prayer for divine light, will cause their own hearts to throb with the quickening influence of the grace of God, their own affections to glow with more divine fervor. Their whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful. . . . The testimonies borne by them in the Sabbath services will be filled with power. With joy they will bear witness to the preciousness of the experience they have gained in working for others.”*

Getting Started

A. Read the following to your class:

“In her devotions that morning, Debra turned to Isaiah. One promise she had underlined jumped out at her. [Read Isaiah 49:16 to the class.] Later, she read the following in The Ministry of Healing, page 482: ‘In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. . . . He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand.’

“That afternoon she met up with Linda. Linda felt like her world was caving in. So Debra copied the texts she had read in the morning, wrote a brief note with them, and when Linda wasn’t looking, put them in an obvious place in Linda’s notebook. Linda read the note, grateful for a friend who showed compassion, and thankful for a God who looks after her and cares, even about the small things in life.”

*Ask and discuss: “How have any of you experienced the Word of God in a dramatic way?”

B. Divide the class into small groups. Write each of the following activities on pieces of paper, and put them in a bowl: Bible study, prayer walking, memorizing Scripture, reading, journaling. Each group will draw a paper, use a concordance to find a Bible verse to support the idea, draw a picture illustrating it (ask them to color it or use colored markers or pencils), and read a Bible verse support-
Discussing the Ideas

1. How can a vibrant devotional life change your view of life?
2. Share what you would like to do during your time with God.
3. How can your devotional time be both a time of giving and of receiving?
4. In what ways can a positive devotional life affect our thoughts of others, and others thoughts of us?
5. How might Jesus have devotions if He were living in our modern age?
6. How can family worship fit into the devotional experience? Should family worship be our only devotional time?
7. Think of ways your church will grow when its members are applying a vibrant, daily devotional time to their life.
8. Explain the difference between righteousness by works and being transformed by the Word of God.

Delving Into the Word

A. The following questions may be assigned to small groups or used from the front as discussion questions. Have the students look up the answers: ● When should we have our devotions? Gen. 24:63; Ps. 5:3; Ps. 63:1; ● Where should we have our devotions? Isa. 56:7; Matt. 6:5, 6; Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Acts 12:12; 1 Tim. 2:8. ● In what ways can we vary our devotions? Steps to Christ, p. 103; Ps. 46:10; Luke 6:12; 1 Tim. 4:15 (NKJV); ● In what ways can we share our experience in God’s Word with others? Isa. 58:5–14; Zech. 8:16; Mark 5:19; 1 Pet. 3:15.

B. On a flipchart, draw a chart with two columns. Label the first column Who Had Devotions? Label the second column How Did They Have Devotions? Then have the class look up the following verses to find information to fill in both columns: ● 1 Sam. 10:9–16; ● 12:20–23; ● Ps. 5:1, 3; ● Dan. 6:10; ● Mark 1:35; ● Luke 2:36, 37; ● Luke 6:12; ● Luke 9:28, 29; ● Acts 10:9; ● Acts 10:30, 31; ● 1 Thess. 3:1–10.

Closing the Activity

Say: “Our devotions are a private matter between us and God. However, the results of being with God are visible to all. How is it between you and God? Is your devotional life an important part of your day? Are you experiencing His Word? By sharing what we have learned, our experience will grow and we will have the capacity to learn more. My prayer is that each of you will choose to make a daily appointment with Jesus.”

Give each student a copy of the activity on page 32. Have them do as much of it as they can in the remaining time. Encourage them to complete it during the Sabbath afternoon hours.

Karen Pires, Ooltewah, Tennessee, U.S.A.

*My Life Today, p. 234.
Devotions in the Bible

Use the following verses to find information to fill in the blanks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who had devotions?</th>
<th>How did they have devotions?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fasting, prayed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus took friends to the mountains to pray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prayed for others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose a great while before day and departed into a solitary place and prayed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking to God in the morning and looking up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
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</table>
Walking in the Light

Surveying the Source
John 3:17, 19; 8:12; Rom. 3:10–20; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 John 1:5–2:2.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Compare darkness with light, blindness with sight, and sin with forgiveness.
► Discuss how Christ’s life brought light, sight, and forgiveness to this world.
► Commit to spreading light, sight, and forgiveness to their world.

Preparing to Lead
The first chapter of Jean Vanier’s book *Becoming Human* is worth reading. Vanier describes a blind, deaf, and mentally handicapped 16-year-old who moved to l’Arche, where abled and disabled lived communally.

“Whenever he felt someone close by, [Eric] would stretch out his arms and try to clutch that person and to climb up on them. Once he had succeeded in getting someone to hold him, his actions would become wild: he would lose control, struggling to be held and at the same time, jumping up and down. . . .

“It took a long time in l’Arche before he found some inner peace. Little by little, as he learned to trust those around him, he discovered he was loved.”

Getting Started
A. Read the quote from Jean Vanier in Preparing to Lead. Have your class discuss how Eric got from where he was emotionally when he arrived at l’Arche, to finding “inner peace.” Ask: ● “What would you do if you were Jean Vanier?”
● “What do you think Jean Vanier and the other members of l’Arche did to teach Eric to trust them?” ● “How we are like Eric?” ● “How does Christ teach us to trust Him despite our blindness, deafness, and mental handicaps?”
B. Have class members describe individuals who have inspired them to become a better person. On a whiteboard, list the characteristics these individuals had. Underline the characteristics they had in common.

Ask: ● “Do you feel condemned by these people’s good examples?” ● “What is the difference between inspiration and shame as a motivator?” ● “Which motivator would be light and which would be darkness?” ● “How does Christ motivate us?” ● “Does He ever shame us?” ● “Can we choose our reaction?”

Delving Into the Word
A. Distribute the activity on page 33, and draw the same table on a whiteboard. List the characteristics of Bad/Darkness on one side of the table and the characteristics of Good/Light on the other side. Then have your class match the symptom

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Materials
whiteboard/flipchart/chalkboard and appropriate markers; pencils; Bibles
peace, from self-hate to self-trust, began when Claudia realized that she was loved. “When we reveal to people our belief in them, their hidden beauty rises to the surface where it may be more clearly seen by all.”

Ask your class members how they can bring light to the Claudias in their world.

Read this quote from Jean Vanier’s book: “She was seven years old and had spent practically her whole life in a dismal, overcrowded asylum. Claudia was blind, fearful of relationships, filled with inner pain and anguish. . . .

“It was community, love, and friendship that finally brought her inner peace. This movement from chaos to inner peace, from self-hate to self-trust, began when Claudia realized that she was loved. “When we reveal to people our belief in them, their hidden beauty rises to the surface where it may be more clearly seen by all.”

Ask your class members how they can bring light to the Claudias in their world.

Jennifer Morgan, St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada

2. Ibid., pp. 20, 22, 23.
In Ephesians 5:8–10, 2 Corinthians 6:14, and 1 John 1:5–2:2, what are the characteristics of darkness (evil) and light (goodness)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evil/Darkness:</th>
<th>Goodness/ Light:</th>
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Walking in the Light: Keeping His Commandments

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Better understand the biblical relationship between love and obedience.
► Examine their own spiritual lives to see if they are walking in the light.
► Identify any adjustments they need to make in their spiritual journey to walk as Jesus walked.

Preparing to Lead
“It has been said by someone that ‘the proper study of mankind is man.’ . . . I believe . . . the proper study of God’s elect is God. . . . The highest science . . . which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.”*

Just as we do not study our earthly fathers in an academic sense, so, too, God reveals His nature through experience. It is through obedience—walking as Jesus walked—that we come to know our Father God more intimately, moment by moment.

Getting Started
A. Using graph paper, have students chart their spiritual journey from the time they accepted Christ to today. After students have had a chance to do this, use a flipchart to chart a hypothetical Christian journey. As you do, take time to discuss the highs and lows and the importance of overall continued growth, even if there are downward turns along the way. Discuss the danger of “flatlining” or “hitting a plateau” in the context of the lesson’s focus on continuing to walk in the light.

B. Have students complete the “What’s Your Purpose?” exercise (p. 34). This is based on Wednesday’s lesson. Be sure to discuss this and steps outlined in Wednesday’s lesson. While the exercise will bring different pieces together, students will likely need direction in identifying their God-given purpose and acting upon it.

Delving Into the Word
A. Using concordances and/or topical Bibles, divide students into two groups—one finding texts on love and the other on obedience. Set a strict time limit, as these are both extensive topics. Have them come back together to share the overall picture they gained of their topics. Explore any overlapping texts that deal with both love and obedience. Discuss the interplay of the two topics, with particular

*John 14:7

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emphasizing the context of one’s spiritual journey. Be sure the discussion includes at least the following references: God walking with Adam and Eve in the garden; Enoch; kings known as either walking in the ways of the Lord or not; Psalm 23; Jesus.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What’s wrong with standing in the light? Why is the emphasis on walking in it?
2. The introduction in the quarterly to this week’s lesson gives a bleak picture. Is this the end for all doubt? Or is there a role for questioning within the Christian life? Is there a difference between questioning and doubt? Be sure your answers are solidly grounded in the Bible.
3. What do you love more than God? How does this affect your spiritual life? What do you need to do to reorient your priorities?
4. What would your life look like if you walked the same way Jesus walked? What would be different?
5. The Bible teaches us that love is action, and that it is a result of our obedience to God. How does this notion differ from the world’s idea that love is a feeling? What are the implications of this difference for your life?
6. What are some signs of spiritual complacency? How can you ward off this dangerous condition in your own life?

**Closing the Activity**

Read Revelation 14:1–5 aloud. Have students reflect on what it means to “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (verse 4, NIV). On index cards, have students write tangible steps they can take in the next week to further their walk with the Lord. Encourage them to share these steps with a spiritual partner or mentor for greater accountability.

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**Kaaryn Sanon, Randallstown, Maryland, U.S.A.**

What’s Your Purpose?

If the “purpose of life is a life of purpose” (Wednesday’s lesson), what’s your yours?

**Spiritual Gifts** *(If you don’t know, that’s OK . . . but ask a church leader about a spiritual gifts inventory so you can find out! NOTE: Different inventories might list slightly different variations of gifts.)*

CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

- Administration
- Discernment
- Evangelism
- Exhortation
- Faith
- Giving
- Healing
- Hospitality
- Intercession
- Knowledge
- Languages
- Leadership
- Mercy
- Music
- Pastoral
- Prophecy
- Service
- Skilled Craft
- Teaching
- Wisdom
- Other

**Things I like to do:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperaments (choose one—at MOST two—that most accurately describe your personality.)</th>
<th>Sanguine</th>
<th>Choleric</th>
<th>Melancholic</th>
<th>Phlegmatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>light-hearted; fun-loving; people person; spontaneous</td>
<td>ambitious; energetic; and passionate</td>
<td>thoughtful; ponderer; may be highly creative</td>
<td>calm; unemotional; self-content; consistent; rational; curious; observant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recall a specific time you felt “called” or really had a sense of accomplishment about something you did:
Walking in the Light: Renouncing Worldliness

Surveying the Source
Dan. 5:13; John 15:19; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:8, 13; 2 Pet. 3:10–12; 1 John 2:12–17.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand the difference between being in the world and being of the world.
► Know why it is important that Christians stand apart from nonbelievers.
► Have a concrete idea of what they can do to separate themselves from the world yet still minister in the world.

Preparing to Lead
“Home! And you are all here! And I’m not going to leave here ever again, because I love you all! And there’s no place like home!”*

Imagine you are in a motel. You don’t decorate or unpack. Your dream house is at home, and the person you love most lives there. You don’t waste time worrying about the motel furniture, and you call your loved one whenever possible. The motel isn’t important; you just want to go home!

Likewise, we are just visiting this earth—a motel until reach heaven. We should spend as much time with our Lord as possible and focus less on this world.

Getting Started
A. Cut up the puzzle, and put it in the box. Label the box “The World.” Let each student take a puzzle piece and write their name on the back. If you have a large class, you may need more than one puzzle. Have the class or groups put their puzzles together, and secure the pieces with tape or glue. Look at the puzzle(s). Ask: ● “What parallels can you draw between this puzzle and Christianity?” ● “Will the completed puzzle fit back into the box it came in?” ● “How does this reflect the way we should relate to the world as Christians?”

B. Make a circle with a piece of string. Have everyone stand with both hands holding the string. Ask: ● “What limitations does holding the string enforce on you?” ● “Would you want to be the first one to let go? Why or why not?” Then have one or two volunteers let go and step into the middle. Ask those in the middle: ● “Are you still part of the circle?” ● “How is being in the circle different from being part of the circle?” Discuss how this portrays Christianity and the world.

Delving Into the Word
A. Ask each person to look up the verses on their puzzle piece and read them. Make a chart and title it Worldliness versus Godliness. Make
three columns with the headings What, Why, and How. List each verse in one of the columns, and briefly discuss why each verse goes into that category. Ask:
● “What does the Bible describe as worldly?”
● “How does that differ from godliness?”
● “Why should we strive to reject worldly things?”
● “According to the Bible, how should we separate ourselves from the secular world?”

Next, consider Jesus’ life here on earth. Ask:
● “How did He manage to be in the world, but not worldly?”
● “What did He do physically?”
● “What was His attitude?”
● “The end is soon. Are you reflecting His example in your life?”

Say: “Throughout the ages, there have been godly people. Let’s take a look at Genesis 6:5–8; Esther 4:4–16; 9:29–32; Daniel 1; 5:13, 14; and 1 Peter 2:22–24.”

Make a list of ancient and modern people who walked/are walking in God’s light. Ask:
● “What characteristics make these people stand out?”
● “Do you think it’s easier or more difficult to renounce worldliness today? Defend your answer.”

B. Have the class read the following verses: Genesis 6:5–9; Esther 4:4–16, 9:29–32; Daniel 1; 5:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:22–24. Say: “Each of the people in these verses stood apart from the world, despite trying circumstances.” Ask:
● “What did they do to set themselves apart?”
● “How did they think that would affect them?”
● “What was the result?”
● “Give examples of how we face similar persecution or tests today.”
● “How do we usually respond?”
● “Is it easier to go with the crowd or to stand apart?”

Then read the following verses: Matthew 6:1–8, 19, 24–34; Romans 12:9–21; Galatians 5:13, 14, 16–25; and 2 Peter 1:5–8. Make a list of characteristics, using one column for worldliness and one column for godliness. Ask:
● “Which of these things are we emulating in our lives?”
● “How does the attitude one must have differ between worldliness and godliness?”
● “In what ways do we see more characteristics of worldliness in the media?”

Then consider what we know about the end times (1 Pet. 4:7; 2 Pet. 3:10–12; 1 John 2:17; Rev. 12:11). Ask:
● “How do these verses help us focus less on worldly things?”
● “Does that imply that we shouldn’t plan for the future? Explain.”

1. Does being separate from the world mean we shouldn’t interact with non-Christians?
2. How can Christians reach people on their level without joining them there? Support your answer.
3. If someone has to ask in order to tell if you’re a Christian or not, are you really living a Christian life?
4. What habits and attitudes do you think lead to a closer relationship with Jesus and looser ties to this world?
5. Do you see a difference between having nice things and loving the things of this world? If so, what?
6. What can you change in your own life to draw closer to Jesus and farther from the world?

Discussing the Ideas

Closing the Activity

Summarize the main points of the lesson. Hand out note cards and pencils. Ask each class member to write down two or three things of the world in their lives that they need to change, and how they plan to change them to improve their relationship with Christ. The card is for them to keep as a reminder of their commitment to cling to Jesus. Ask for a volunteer to close with prayer.

Amanda Ernst, Douglassville, Georgia, U.S.A.

*Spoken by Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz.
Walking in the Light: Rejecting Antichrists

Surveysing the Source

John 15:4–10; Acts 2:15–17; Rom. 6:2, 11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2 Pet. 2:19; 1 John 2:13, 18–29; 4:1–6.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Identify and explain the traits of false prophets and antichrists.

► Explain the difference between false prophets/antichrists and the antichrist.

Preparing to Lead

“The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.”* At the end of time, we know that many false prophets and antichrists will try to take our eyes off of the truth. We must learn to test their claims and miracles against Scripture and through daily communication with Jesus.

Getting Started

A. In recent history, there have been several religious movements in which the leader claimed to be “God” or “Christ” (David Koresh and the Branch Davidians; Jim Jones and the People’s Temple, etc.). Using the blackboard, whiteboard, or flipchart to record answers, have class members name those events, listing the qualities of the leaders and/or their claims. Discuss what the end result was for their followers. Ask: ● “Would the real Christ have made those claims?” ● “Would He have treated others in those ways?” ● “Would the followers have met that end?”

B. Say: “Many of us have been tricked by or drawn to something that was not of God or knows of someone who has. It may have been something that was a clear distraction, or it may have been more subtle.” Then have class members share stories from their own lives or the lives of others (being careful not to name names) where false prophets, antichrists, or even “worldly” things have come between believers and their relationship with Christ.

Delving Into the Word

A. Using the texts from Surveying the Source, make a chart on the blackboard, whiteboard, or flipchart comparing qualities/actions of true believers with those of

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antichrists and false prophets. Make two columns, one with Believers written at the top, the other with Antichrists. Have class members read each scripture aloud, then list the mentioned qualities under the appropriate heading. Discuss how the qualities of believers apply to our own lives today.

**B.** Have class members read each text aloud from Surveying the Source. Using the reproducible activity for this lesson (p. 36), have members write down the quality that believers should have, or what they should watch out for. Class members should then share their answers, discussing practical applications for each verse/principle in their own daily lives.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What are the traits/qualities of antichrists and false prophets?
2. How will we know the antichrist?
3. How have others before us been tricked?
4. How has your idea of who and what the antichrist is changed since the beginning of this lesson study?
5. What are some of the traits/qualities of true believers?

6. What are some things we can do to maintain a strong connection with God each day? Why is it important for us to have that strong connection with God?
7. How do you think things will change in the coming years before Jesus returns? Do you think things will be worse? More tricky? Explain.
8. Why is it important for us to study this topic?

**Closing the Activity**

Have someone read Matthew 24:5. Say: “Already, many have come in Jesus’ name. Already, many have been tricked and led astray. But Satan isn’t done yet. He has much more work to do. This is why it’s so important for us to maintain a connection with Jesus through reading the Bible and prayer. Only through this constant communication will our eyes be opened to the lies Satan puts in front of us.” Close with prayer.

**Allison Zollman, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, U.S.A.**

*The Great Controversy, p. 593.*
Watching for the Antichrist

The Bible tells us we must watch and be ready for those who will try to trick us. However, it doesn’t leave us hanging there with no instruction. It also tells us what traits true believers will have, and it guides us toward Jesus with each step. Read the verses below, and for each one, write the quality believers should have, or what they should watch out for.

John 15:4–10 ____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Acts 2:15–17___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Rom. 6:2, 11 __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
2 Cor. 3:18 __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
2 Thess. 2:3, 4 _______________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Heb. 1:1, 2 __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
2 Pet. 2:19 __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
1 John 2:13, 18–29 ____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
1 John 4:1–6 _________________________________________________________
Living as Children of God

Surveying the Source
Gen. 3:5; Ps. 51:4; Isa. 1:2; John 1:12; Heb. 9:26, 28; 1 John 3:1–10.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
- Define and understand what it means to be a child of God in a family setting. This includes their family of origin, their work, and/or student family, or other social settings which operate as a family.
- Discuss and plan specific and identifiable ways to reflect to others what it means to be a child of God and a member of His family.
- Learn specific times, dates, places, and means by which to demonstrate to others what it is to be a child of God in order to act on the first two aims of this lesson.

Preparing to Lead
The New Testament was written in a society ruled by the Roman Empire. Rome had customs understood by all the writers and initial readers of every book in the New Testament. One of those Roman practices was “exposure.” When a child was born, the midwife would place it naked on a cloth on the ground. The father would view the infant and either pick it up—thus claiming it as his own and taking responsibility to nurture and raise the child—or walk away without claiming it. If the father walked away, the infant would be left on the cloth to die of dehydration and exposure. Our heavenly Father chose to pick us up. We are His. What does that mean, and how do we live as members of His family?

Getting Started
A. Have the class think of and list items pertaining to the following: (1) general traits of a family; (2) traits of a child of God or a family member of His family. List as many traits as they can think of. Begin a column for each, comparing and contrasting them as the lists grow.
B. Show several sizes and strengths of magnets, from the “refrigerator-door” type of very light magnets to more powerful magnets. Demonstrate how they attract metallic objects such as paper clips, pins, nails, etc. Note that the stronger the magnet, the more items it attracts and the more it energizes those items to attract even more items. Also note that the magnets have polarity where they push apart, just as we are to push away from evil living.

Delving Into the Word
A. If you have used alternative A in Getting Started, have the class look at all the texts in Surveying the Source to discover specific family traits and behaviors...
mentioned in the texts. Write each text by the corresponding listed traits in each column. Look for both positive traits and negative traits/issues to be avoided. Solicit other traits and texts from the class. Discuss how these traits impact other people both in and beyond the family of God. Stay with the biblical texts!

B. If you used alternative B in Getting Started, then break down the textual materials under the categories Children of the Light and Children of the Darkness.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What are the adoption laws in your location? What are the processes? The costs? The long-term implications? In Roman law, you could disown a naturally born child, but once adopted, you could never disown that child. The adopted child could walk away from the parents, but the parents could never abandon or disclaim that child. What are the spiritual implications of this historical fact in light of the Bible telling us that we are God’s children by adoption through Jesus?

2. How would/could you explain to your child or sibling that she or he is adopted? When would you begin that process? At infancy? Two years of age? At 22? What are the implications of when you would tell them and how you would tell them? How does that apply spiritually?

3. Whom do you know who is adopted?

What behavioral or other traits have they picked up from their adoptive family? How does that apply spiritually?

4. If you found out tomorrow that you were adopted, how would that affect your identity? Your view of life? Your relationship with your parents?

5. How have you experienced someone behaving as a child of God? How did that impact your life?

6. Who in your environment is struggling with their family identity? How can you be supportive? Be specific.

7. Do you obey out of obligation or out of appreciation? What have been transition points in your Christian growth when you have moved from obligation to appreciation in your obedience to God? If obligation is 1 and appreciation is 10 on a line, what would your number be right now?

**Closing the Activity**

This is the “so what?” part of the lesson where it is critically important to move students from understanding to action which is observable, doable, and measurable. You can reproduce and use the worksheet (p. 37), or lead by discussion One way to do this is to break the class into two groups, with each group looking at all the texts and then reporting to the other group what they have found. Lead your discussion based on class discovery and input. Discuss specific behaviors which attract people to God as well as those which repel people from Him— noting that we can do either. Discuss ways when the attraction is less or when lost pieces fall away from the magnetically gathered group.

**Dick Stenbakken, Loveland, Colorado, U.S.A.**
The purpose of this worksheet is to prompt specific responses and commitments to live as a child of God in my immediate environment and to do so with specific target dates for those specific behaviors. An example would be:

I plan to grow by:

☐ spending 15 minutes per day reading my Bible starting this Sunday, or
☐ looking for ways to help someone with their studies before exams.

I plan to show results by:

☐ inviting three people to pray with and for me by next Wednesday and by praying for them during my private worship time daily, or
☐ monitoring my tendency to gossip or criticize starting now!

Because I am a child of God, I, ________________________, plan to grow in Him by:

_______________________  Starting date of  _________________________

_______________________  Starting date of  _________________________

_______________________  Starting date of  _________________________

I plan to show the results by:

_______________________  Date to be done  _________________________

_______________________  Date to be done  _________________________

_______________________  Date to be done  _________________________

Signed and dated:  ____________________________________________

Witnesses and prayer partners:  _________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________
Loving Brothers and Sisters

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand that loving both God and others is a natural response and/or behavior that stems from an intimate relationship with Him.
► Not only be able to discuss the “how to” aspect of loving others, but also will be able to diagnose what is standing in their way of fully living out this commandment.
► Discuss the real-life struggles and obstacles that make it difficult to love others in a consistent manner.

Preventing to Lead
The commandment to love others that we find in 1 John 3 and 4 has for many people been quoted and superficially discussed so often that the life-changing challenge it presents has been lost. The only way to make this lesson a non-
clichéd discussion is to connect this commandment to something the students can relate to, and to have an honest and open discussion about the difficulties faced by all who try to obey it.

Getting Started
A. Discuss a current event and compare/contrast the circumstances and the way the people involved in it are handling the situation in light of the biblical command to love both God and others with all your heart. Do not allow the discussion to be critical of those involved in the event who are not exemplifying desirable behaviors. The point is to simply explore the contrast between command-
ment-behavior and noncommandment-behavior.
B. To help the class understand that love is the basis of our faith, discuss how each one of the Ten Commandments is based on love. Another option would be to discuss how love was the motive behind Creation and Christ becoming a human and sacrificing His life for our sins.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into three or four groups. Give each group one of the following Bible stories to read and study in light of John’s commandment to love others: Abraham and Sodom (Genesis 18); Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37, 42–45); Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:1–19); Saul becoming Paul (Acts 9:1–31).
Have each group discuss two factors: (1) how their story defines love for others; (2) how the principles found in their story can be applied to our lives today.
After a sufficient amount of time, have each group share their findings with the
rest of the class. Write their answers to the questions on a flipchart. Discuss any themes that emerge and how these themes are relevant for today.

B. Have the class look up the following texts: Deuteronomy 22:1–3; Isaiah 58:6–10; Proverbs 31:9; Zechariah 7:10; Matthew 5:44; 25:31–45; Luke 3:11; Romans 12:20; James 1:27. Discuss each one in light of the following questions. Have someone write answers on a flipchart: (1) How does this text define love? (2) What specific activities can we do today that are in the spirit of this text?

After each text has been analyzed, discuss any themes that emerge and how these themes are relevant for today.

### Discussing the Ideas

1. What fears naturally well up in you when you honestly consider living up to the commandment of loving others?
2. How has this lesson opened your eyes to a new way of viewing God or His expectations of you?
3. Share a time when someone showed you genuine Christian love. How did it make you feel? What did you do as a result?
4. When might there be a time when too much love in the form of help is shown?
5. An old hymn says, “‘Tis love that makes us happy;/‘Tis love that smooths the way.” How is this so?
6. How does the world view love? How has this view affected the world?
7. How can the biblical view of loving others make this world a better place?
8. What obstacles/character traits get in our way of loving others? What can we do about these obstacles?

### Closing the Activity

Give each student a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 38). Allow enough time for them to complete it. Then have them fold their papers in half. Offer a prayer in which their concerns are given over entirely to God. Then each student can take his or her paper to the designated place and burn it, watching the sheet disappear and the smoke rise to God.

The fact that God is now in charge of those concerns should be adequately discussed after all the papers have been burned.

**Missy Blackmer, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.**
Think of specific things that are standing in your way of loving God and others unconditionally. Write these things in, on, or around the wastebasket below.
Believing in the Son of God

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Discuss the nature of faith and what it means to live with and without faith.
► Explore the nature of biblical faith, specifically in the lives of various Bible characters.
► Identify ways they can apply what they have learned about having faith to their own circumstances.

Preparing to Lead
While there are many definitions of faith, Patrick Overton states: “When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: There will be something solid to stand on, or you will be taught how to fly.”

Getting Started
A. Brainstorm words that come to mind when you say the word faith, and have the class write down their definition of faith. Discuss some of the everyday activities in life that require us to have faith. (Example: When we sit on a chair, we have faith that it will hold us up.)

B. Have each class member (or invite six people if you have a large class) choose a random item from your paper bag and think about how this item could be connected to a biblical story of faith. (Example: a coat hanger—Joseph’s coat of many colors. Joseph had strong faith.)

Delving Into the Word
A. Read in Hebrews 11 about the biblical characters who had great faith. Discuss each individual in relationship to the following: ● “What did the individual need to have faith about or in?” ● “How did God strengthen the individual’s faith?” ● “Other than having faith, what is the main lesson we can learn from each individual’s life?”

Have the class take turns reading Hebrews 11:13–17, 39, 40. Say: “These verses hit at the heart of Hebrews 11. How can we apply the message in these verses to our lives?” Then ask class members to reflect on their lives and how they would answer questions one and two above. Ask if anyone is willing to share their answers. If no one is, perhaps you could share how you responded.

B. Have the class think about Jesus’ 12 disciples and their faith journeys. Ask:
● “Which disciple stands out as having the strongest faith?” ● “Which one, the weakest?” Have the class read the following passages to add to the discussion: Matthew 21:1–7; Mark 16:14; Luke 17:5,
Have someone read Matthew 16:24. *Ask:* “What are some practical ways we can follow this very important piece of advice from Jesus?”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How would you describe faith to a child?
2. Is faith based on evidence, a feeling, or both? Explain your answer.
3. What is the difference between faith and hope?
4. What things in your life do you find hard to have faith in?
5. How does having faith change a person’s life?
6. Hebrews 11:2 refers to “God’s approval” (NLT). How important is it for you to have God’s approval in your life?
7. What questions do you have about the Christian faith that are still unanswered?

**Closing the Activity**

Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 39). Play some quiet music, and ask the class to individually write their responses to the sentences. Then get them to share some of their responses with one other person and pray with that person.

**Nina Atcheson, Scarborough, Queensland, Australia**
The one gift I’ve always wanted but never received is... 

This time last year I would never have thought God would... 

One of God’s attributes that I most appreciate is... 

One thing I find really hard to believe is... 

The biggest choice I’m facing this week is... 

Roadblocks keeping me from having greater faith are...
Confidence

Surveying the Source
John 3:36; Acts 4:29; 1 Cor. 9:27; Heb. 4:16; 1 John 5:13–21; Rev. 12:9.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Analyze the importance of aligning their will to the will of God.
► Explore the basis of God’s trustworthiness.
► Understand that God will always act in their best interest.

Preparing to Lead
Most of us are afraid to ask God to manifest His power. Maybe we don’t think He will listen, maybe we don’t believe He will come through. Perhaps God isn’t the one with the problem; we just don’t know how to ask. There is an important condition to be met when we ask God to intervene in our lives. We need to remember that He will respond according to His will, which is ultimately a much better alternative to our narrow-sighted, selfish viewpoint. In His love and wisdom, He asks us to submit fully to Him. Only then will we want what He wants.

Getting Started
A. Divide your class in half. Blindfold half of the class, and have them stand in a line. Explain that some of them will be standing in front of chairs and some will not. One by one, students in the other half will bring the blindfolded students in front of a chair and ask them if they believe that there is a chair behind them. If they do, ask them to sit on the chair. When the exercise is done, ask students why they chose to sit or why they did not.

B. Say: “In James 2:19 we find that ‘even the demons believe [there is one God]—and shudder’ (NIV). Apparently we need to do better than just believe.” Then direct the students to write a list of reasons why they believe in God, using these three categories as their guide:
● What He has done in the past;
● What He is doing presently;
● What He has promised for the future.

Write their responses on the board.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “When we present our petitions to God, our theme must be: ‘Thy [God’s] will be done.’ The Bible gives us examples of people who at times asked for the wrong thing. Others boldly asked God to intervene in a radical way, and He did.” Then divide your class into four groups.

Assign each of the groups one of the following characters and Bible references:
● Elijah (1 Kings 18:20–39);
● Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1–7; 20:1–21);
● Jonah (Jonah 1:1–3; 3:1–3);
● Paul (2 Cor. 7:5–10).

Ask each group to study their story and present a lesson learned from their
experience.

B. Write the following Bible references on a piece of paper: •Psalm 91:9, 10; •Isaiah 26:3; •Mark 11:24; •John 14:2, 3; •Philippians 4:19; •2 Thessalonians 3:3; •James 1:5; •Revelation 21:4. Cut out each one and put them in a basket. Ask each student to pick one out of the basket and read the verse from their Bible. Have someone write the text on the board. After all of the texts are written on the board, discuss the following questions: •“How have these promises had an impact in my life?” •“What do they tell me about God in the future?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. Who would you end up being if you allowed God to carry out His will in your life?
2. What role does obedience play in submitting yourself to God’s will?
3. In the midst of our sin, how can we boldly approach God?
4. How do you know you can trust God?
5. Why does God sometimes answer in what we think is an unfavorable way, even when the request seems to be aligned with His will?
6. How can we learn to ask God for the right things?
7. Why does doubt prevent us from asking God for radical manifestations of His power?

Closing the Activity

Say: “In Jesus’ model prayer, we find a phrase that allows us to put aside our wants and unlock God’s power. That phrase is ‘Thy [God’s] will be done’ (Matt. 6:10).”

Then pass out copies of the reproducible activity (p. 40). Instruct the students to form a circle and have each one read one of the statements on the activity sheet. Have the students pledge their submission to God and His perfect will. If they want to make that commitment, ask them to sign the pledge. Break into pairs and have students pray for each other.

Sandra Araújo-Delgado, Apison, Tennessee, U.S.A.
Oh God, thy will be done...

In my thoughts;

In my words;

In my relationships;

In my fun;

In my choices;

In my doubts;

In my weaknesses;

In my needs;

In my body;

In my dreams;

In my life.

____________________________

Name
Important Themes in First John

Surveying the Source
Matt. 5:13; John 14:6; Eph. 4:25–5:21; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John.

Plotting the Course

The students will:
► Accomplish some in-depth “mining” of a single book of the Bible (see “Preparing to Lead”).
► Be clearer about Jesus’ existence on earth “in the flesh.”
► Possess the tools and, hopefully, the desire to make life-changing decisions about their future relationship with the Jesus of the first epistle of John.

Preparing to Lead
Most often, our Sabbath School lesson surveys a topic with the help of texts from different Bible books. Lessons such as this week’s allow students to dig rather than merely survey. They have an opportunity to review 1 John in depth and to give roots to their understanding of and appreciation for Jesus as the giver of love, light, and life.* Hopefully students will be encouraged to generate profound thoughts and conversations without being overwhelmed by the challenge of discussing a whole book in a single session.

Getting Started
A. Encourage students to quickly review Sabbath’s lesson, then “take on” Ellen Johnson. Let them imagine themselves in Larry King’s chair. How would they respond to Johnson’s assertion that there was not “a shred of secular evidence” that Jesus existed, and that therefore He did not exist? (Possible answers: Jesus’ existence in the writings of such secular historians as Cornelius Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Pliny the Younger, etc. [see Source Book for Ancient Church History and The Evidence for Jesus]; prophecy, including minute details of Jesus’ life foretold in the Old Testament; scientists believing in the Bible [see the Connect in Friday’s lesson]; archaeological evidence proving the Bible to be more accurate than secular sources [“We Can Believe the Bible,” Voice of Prophecy].)
B. Read 1 Peter 3:1. Emphasize the idea of winning over an unbelieving spouse “without a word” (KJV – margin). Mention the advice in the May 2008 editorial in Canadian Adventist Messenger that we must be willing to tell non-Adventists, “You may be right” even when we really want to say “You must be crazy” (www.sdacc.org/departments/messenger). Then direct students’ attention to the writer’s contention in Thursday’s lesson that Adventists “are quite good at claiming special knowledge of God, but not so good at loving our neighbors unconditionally.” With those three references in mind, lead them in a discussion on how to persuade an atheist friend that Jesus is real.

Materials
Bibles; pencils
Delving Into the Word

A. Refer the class to the C. S. Lewis concept about “good men” and “new men” in Sunday’s lesson, under “Created in Righteousness.” Then distribute the handout, “The Good and the New” (p. 41). Have the class fill in the columns either individually, in pairs, or in groups. Then discuss.

B. Remind the class that sensory perception (taste, touch, smell, etc.) is important in experience and in memory.

Discussing the Ideas

1. It’s been said that the three temptations mentioned in 1 John 2:16 are the only three available to Satan. How do they compare with the three temptations he used against Jesus in the wilderness? (See Matthew 4:1–11.)

2. In 1 John 2:7, the apostle says he is not offering us a new commandment. However, in the next verse, he says he is, in fact, offering a new one. How does the second part of verse 8 clarify his message? What’s the commandment?

3. John implores us to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1–3). What does he mean? How do we do that? (See also Isaiah 8:20.)

4. How many Bible books did John write? (Most scholars say five—the Gospel of John, his three epistles, and Revelation.)


6. What evidence do we have that John wrote both 1 John and the Gospel of John? (Examples: similar message and wording, for example—John 16:24 and 1 John 1:4; John 14:15 and 1 John 2:3; John 13:34 and 1 John 2:8; John 1:9 and 1 John 2:8; John 12:35 and 1 John 2:11; John 15:12 and 1 John 3:11; John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14; John 14:17 and 1 John 4:6; John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9.)

Closing the Activity

Ask two or three students to share in a sentence or so what they learned from 1 John about the accuracy of the Bible, Jesus’ life on earth, or about love and/or forgiveness. Then ask for a show of hands by those who have learned something from the week’s study that could make a difference in their lives right away or in the future. See if there is one person willing to give a concrete example. Then have a prayer, by you or a student, seeking God’s help to make the life changes that God wants them, and you, to make.

Frank A. Campbell, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

“GOOD PEOPLE” AND “NEW PEOPLE”

Read the second paragraph in the section “Created in Righteousness” in Sunday’s lesson of the CQ quarterly. Make sure you understand C. S. Lewis’ distinction between “good men” and “new men,” that is, the idea that “good” people are only good in their own eyes and that “new” people depend on Christ for their “nnewness of life.” Then place each of the alphabetized items below in one of the columns. The first two items are done for you.

A. Legalists (people who believe obeying the commandments will get them to heaven)
B. Believing in salvation through Christ
C. John and his brother James wanting to reserve the two spots closest to Christ in the kingdom
D. John, when Christ told His mother, “Behold, thy son”
E. Those who love their brethren
F. Peter swearing He will follow Jesus even if he lost his life doing so
G. Peter weeping after the cock had crowed twice
H. The publican (tax collector) in Jesus’ parable who said, “God be merciful to me a sinner”
I. Those willing to engage Christ as their Advocate or Lawyer when they sin
J. Saying we’re “in the light” but hating our brothers and sisters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Good” People</th>
<th>“New” People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) Legalists</td>
<td>(B) Believing in salvation through Christ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John’s Letter to the Chosen Lady

Surveying the Source
Exod. 20:1–17; Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; Heb. 13:2, 3; 2 John; Rev. 2:14, 15; 14:12.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand and identify ways God uses people to warn others of harmful activities or beliefs.
► Be able to identify current interests that can lead to problems or ruin their relationship with Jesus.

Preparing to Lead
John does not write long letters. The length may be due to the size of the sheet of papyrus available at that time. He is writing because he’s concerned about the false teachers who are taking advantage of the Christians’ hospitality. Because the followers of Christ are being kind to others, they are exposed to things that are not true. His warning is to be careful whom we listen to and believe. This is still a valid warning today. We need to test what others are saying. Read Matthew 7:19, 20.

Getting Started
A. Brainstorm with your class things that could turn your attention away from having a strong relationship with Jesus. Have someone write them on a flipchart. These can be good things that become obsessions and therefore, dangerous. Suggestions: television, computers, games, music, books, magazines, sports, entertainment, sleeping, or daydreaming.

Select one of the items on the list. Using the reproducible activity on page 42, have each student draw a design describing different directions this interest might lead a person. Try to identify both a good and a bad direction.

B. Remind the class that grace, mercy, peace, truth, and love are the focus of John’s second letter. He reminds us that loving others is not a new command. Ask: “Why do you think this is written as a command rather than a suggestion?”

Explain that the Greek word gnostis means “knowledge.” Say: “The Gnostics were early Christians. They claimed to have secret knowledge about God. Their teachings were very deceptive. John warns believers to be careful whom they listen to, and that even those who appear to be like the apostles may mislead.” Have someone read 1 John 1:3.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “Traditionally, disciples select who they want to have for a teacher. This
was not the case with Jesus’ disciples. Jesus chose them. The early Christians were warned about many things that could lead them away from Jesus and their spiritual walk with Him. We’re going to look back at some of the guidance Jesus’ disciples and the early Christians had available to them and discuss how this information applies to us today.” Use the following questions and thoughts to guide this discussion: ●The apostles are instructed to take care to do what is right. Why? 2 Corinthians 8:21. ●In Deuteronomy 13:1–5, Moses describes a harsh punishment for those who deceive God’s people. Why did God give this punishment? Was this fair? What should we do today? ●What happens to those who follow deceivers? Revelation 2:14–16 ●What happens to those who seek God? 2 Chronicles 15:15. What kind of rest is Moses talking about? ●What does it take to be godly? 1 Timothy 4:7, 8 ●Even David, the king, asked to be guided. Psalm 25:4, 5 ●What happens when we follow Jesus’ teachings? John 8:31 ●From where does our teaching and learning come? Deuteronomy 6:5–8 ●Who teaches us now? John 16:12, 13 ●Like the disciples, we can reflect back to David’s prayer. Psalm 119:1–8.

B. Say: “Today, we’re going to discover what the Bible tells us about our spiritual life and the dangers that can destroy that life or keep it from growing.” Use the following questions and thoughts to guide the discovery process: ●Do not let anyone deceive you. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 ●God’s words are the truth. Psalm 119:160 ●Walk with God and be blessed. Psalm 119:1 ●Why do you think we are instructed to love God first and then our neighbor? Mark 12:30, 31 ●We should not judge or be judged by food and drink. Why? ●What types of judgment might you face today? Colossians 2:16. ●Avoid foolish arguments. We should try to warn others, but if they ignore us, we must leave them alone. Titus 3:9–11 ●Be a good minister to others. 1 Timothy 4:6 ●Do not twist what is good into believing it is evil. Romans 14:16–18 ●How can we know the truth? John 14:6 ●We need to remain faithful and patient. Revelation 14:12 ●What warning are we given about the last days? 2 Timothy 3:1–5 ●What happens to those who refuse truth? 2 Thessalonians 2:10. ●Remember, we belong to God. 1 John 3:9.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why do you think John might have thought it important to write this letter instead of waiting until he visited them?
2. Why would John want to talk more about his concerns in person rather than write a longer letter first?
3. Who would the Holy Spirit impress to share this type of message today?
4. What methods might be used to share our concerns about others today?
5. When might you be impressed to share a message of warning or concern?
6. What might you need to warn others about today?

Closing the Activity

Role-play ways you could appropriately warn people about a danger they don’t realizing they are facing. Show the same loving spirit John displays in his letter. For example: ●Talk with a friend who is fixated on TV soap operas. ●Work with a friend to find an alternative activity to replace spending too much time playing video games. ●Demonstrate how to select an appropriate book to read. ●Refocus a daydreamer onto something positive and productive.

Judy Shull, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.
The selected item is: ____________________
Where can it take you?
Power Struggle

Surveying the Source
Isa. 14:13, 14; Mark 9:35; 1 Cor. 12:7–31; 1 Corinthians 13; Phil. 2:3; 3 John; Rev. 14:6.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Assess effective and ineffective uses of power that they have observed.
► Build a scriptural foundation for “staying” the mind on God in order to achieve balance and serenity.
► Reflect in a practical way on servanthood.

Preparing to Lead
Last year, just about this time, my wife and I rode the Amtrak train from Seattle to the Midwest of the United States so I could perform a nephew’s wedding. From the way the engineer kept constantly blowing the whistle and slowing the train to a crawl while rumbling through small towns, he clearly understood what kind of power he was controlling.

And as the newly married couple left the church after the nuptials, they both ascended to the cab of a immense, gleaming Case tractor and chugged across town to the reception—and nobody got in their way!

Getting Started
A. Say: “Think about your fifth- or sixth-grade teacher. Did that person use his or her power effectively or not? Give some examples. What did he or she do to help a rowdy class to become calm? Tell about a time this teacher seemed temporarily powerless in the face of something you, or you and the rest of the class, did.”

B. Find out which person in the class (or which person’s parent) has operated the most powerful piece of machinery. Ask that person to describe (1) what that machine could do when its power was used correctly, (2) what could happen if the machine were used incorrectly or carelessly, and (3) rules which had to be followed to use that power properly.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “Here’s a ‘what-if’ scenario. Let’s say that our pastor has been receiving lots of e-mails and phone calls from teens through seniors concerning how worried they are about world events—how powerless they feel. He or she wants to respond to this turmoil, so rather than doing a lot of solo personal study, he’s decided to involve our class. He’s asking us to develop a PowerPoint presentation—complete with music and video clips—that will springboard from...
business, or some other skill). Focus on a real teenager, someone you know—and if that person isn’t quite as talented as I’ve just described, just pretend for a moment. You naturally want to encourage this person, so the next time you see him or her in action, you say, ‘Great job. You’ve really got a lot of talent.’ And he or she looks you in the eye and says, ‘Thanks. Could you answer a question that’s been bothering me? What’s the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?’ Using 1 Corinthians 12:7–31, and any other passages you can think of, try to come up with a clear and satisfying answer.”

Write student responses on a flipchart.

Isaiah 26:3, 4. It will conclude with several practical methods we can use to keep our minds ‘steadfast’ or ‘stayed on’ God. He urges us to absorb all the information we can out of Isaiah 26:3, 4 before going to other parts of the Bible. For now, let’s focus on those practical methods.” Then see what type presentation your class can come up with. Use a flipchart to create PowerPoint slides.

B. Say: “Think of the teenager in your life you are closest to. Maybe this person is a sibling, or a cousin, or a young person in this church. Now imagine that this teen is starting to show some breathtaking talent in sports (or music, acting,...

Discussing the Ideas

1. (This discussion could also lead into the “Who’s First in God’s Eyes” worksheet on page 43.) When Jesus made statements like “The last shall be first” and “He who wants to be greatest must become a servant” was He defining “last/least” and “first/greatest” the way the world does or the way heaven does? Defend your answer.

2. Has the way God uses power needed to change since the Fall? Will it change once Eden is restored? Explain your answers using Bible texts.

3. When have you been a bully? How old were you when you took this role? Whom did you bully? Why? How long (in years) did this bullying last? Have you stopped? If so, what caused you to stop?

4. Let’s imagine that rather than being apprenticed to His dad Jesus had worked at a Home Depot in His youth. How would the young Creator have responded if His boss had (1) bullied or harassed Him, or (2) “written Him up” for a wrong He didn’t do? Put yourself in Jesus’ sandals and speak phrases you imagine He might have spoken.

5. Think of a time when you felt grouchy about God. What did you expect from His power that didn’t happen? Have these feelings changed, and if so, how much? What has caused the change?

6. Pretend that we are a group of heavenly angels, and we’re all working on our personal mission statements. Remember, you are comfortable in the powerful presence of God—a presence which would vaporize sin and sinners if they came too close. As an angel, you yourself have enough power that you must cloak yourself with invisibility while on earth, unless for some reason you’re appearing as “an angel unawares.” List your vision, your mission, and a few specific goals.

Closing the Activity

If you did not use the reproducible activity for the first of the discussion questions, use it close the lesson. Or close by saying: “As Christians, our main goal is to be transformed into the image in which God had originally created us—His image. That image includes the wise use of power. The Bible teaches us about the wrong use of power. Jesus’ life on earth teaches us about how to use power wisely and how to react to the wrong use of power. May we all continually ask God to help us reach our goals in this area.” Close with prayer.

Maylan Schurch, Renton, Washington, U.S.A.
Who’s First in the Eyes of God?

Read Mark 9:33–37. As you do, try to crystallize what Jesus was really saying when He said, “’If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35, NJKV). Then, using words or brief phrases, write descriptions of what the world’s “first” and God’s “first” would look like in the occupations below. Don’t forget to include your own job or potential career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In this career . . .</th>
<th>. . . what’s “first” as the world defines it?</th>
<th>. . . what’s “first” as God defines it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO or supervisor</td>
<td>Making a lot of money</td>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being ruthless—responsible only to the stockholders</td>
<td>Treating employees fairly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remembering Who gives the power to get wealth</td>
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<td>Doctor</td>
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<td>Lawyer</td>
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<td>Aircraft design engineer</td>
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<tr>
<td>News reporter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone from your own current or potential career</td>
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</tbody>
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