

High School Teacher

by David Robinson

Christian Joy— Happiness in the Lord

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1 Walking in the Light

Scripture: 1 John 1:1-7

Aim: By the end of the lesson the student will explain why the truth of God’s Word is the foundation for all joy in life.

NOTE: This is not a traditional help for the teacher; instead, it is a day-by-day guide to aid the teacher in lesson preparation. Use of this guide will assure that the teacher is prepared and that adequate lesson material is available for the class time allotted.

The help for the teacher will be integrated with the student lesson material. The preparation time suggested is ten to fifteen minutes each day for five days. Each section of the lesson material is covered in one of the preparation days. This will allow the teacher, whether a professional or a novice, to be prepared to present each lesson with minimum effort.

The key to success is the regular and consistent use of the material. It is vital that the teacher devote a small amount of time each day to lesson preparation.



Daily Plan

Introducing the Lesson

1. Read the Scripture passage for Lesson 1. Read the **Text Commentary** section of the teacher’s help. Make a note of any comments that might provoke questions from the class.

2. Read the “Start Here” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions to use in the introduction of your lesson.

A. How does much of the world tend to view Christians?

B. How are the goals of God and Satan different?

3. Look up any articles you can find on the life and ministry of the apostle John. Many are available. Visit your church library or ask your pastor for help.

4. Write at least two good declarative sentences you can use to begin your lesson.

5. Pray and ask the Lord to guide you in further preparation.



Explaining the Scriptures

1. Read again the Bible passage used for the text of the lesson. Refer to the notes you made on Day 1 concerning any part of the text that is difficult to understand.

2. Read the “Take a Closer Look” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for use in presentation of the lesson material.

A. How many books of the New Testament did John write?

B. How does John relate joy to our physical senses?

C. Which physical senses does John mention?

D. What are the two purposes for which this book was written?

E. Name at least three conditions relating to happiness.

F. What does John mean by “full joy”?

G. How are light and darkness related?

H. What does the term *walk* mean in the Bible?

I. How is our joy related to knowing and practicing the truth?

J. What are two benefits of walking in the light?

3. Use any reference materials you have available to answer any questions you may have discovered from your reading of the text verses.

4. Pray about what you have learned and about further preparation for this lesson.



Applying the Material to the Lives of the Students

1. Once more read the Bible passage used as the text of the lesson.
2. Read the “Perspectives” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for class discussion.
 - A. How is the foundation related to what is built on it?
 - B. What is the only foundation that will ultimately bring us joy?
 - C. Is “walking” in Jesus a onetime decision? Explain.
 - D. Why would anyone be afraid to have God in his life?
3. Write down a specific lesson you have learned from your study that you want to share with your class.
4. Pray about what you have learned and about further preparation to teach.



Making Positive Changes in the Lives of My Students

1. Read again the Bible passage used as the lesson text.
2. Read the “Building Blocks” section of the student quarterly. Choose some of the following questions to challenge your class members to make changes in their lives based on their understanding of the Bible.
 - A. In what ways are we changed by the choices we make?
 - B. How can the actions of others change the way we feel about ourselves?
 - C. What is the most important choice we can make?
 - D. Is the spiritual or the physical side of life most important?
3. At this point have answers to all the questions suggested here and in the lesson material. If you have any other matters you want to discuss with your class, note them now so that you can research them before class time.

4. Pray about the lesson material asking God to lead you in further preparation.



Taking the Lesson Material into Our Future

1. Read once more the Bible passage used as the lesson text. Remember the best way to learn the Bible is to study the Bible.
2. Read the “Springboard” section of the student quarterly.
3. Are there students in your class who have personal spiritual decisions to make? Don’t be confrontational, but present an opportunity for open and frank discussion of spiritual problems.
4. Present the plan of salvation. Those who are lost need to hear it, and those who are saved need to be reminded of it.
5. Plan a discussion of joy and happiness. Ask your students whether they consider themselves to be happy people. What things or conditions bring them happiness?
6. Make your own brief outline of how you intend to use your class time.
7. Gather any materials you will need for the class and organize them as you intend to use them.
8. Pray again. Ask God to guide you and prepare your heart to teach His Word.

Text Commentary

In many ways the book of 1 John is unusual and unique. Although it has always been classified as an epistle or letter to churches, it bears none of the familiar characteristics of an epistle. There is no salutation and no conclusion. There is nothing in the book that indicates to whom it was written. The only proper name mentioned in the book is Jesus Christ. There is no mention of any specific place in the book; yet, it seems to have been addressed to a specific congregation. It is the content of the book that causes it to be regarded as a letter.

The consensus of Bible scholars is that the book was written by John, the son of Zebedee. This is based on obvious similarities with the other books that John wrote. The date of the book is uncertain although the tone suggests John was an old man when he wrote it, and it was addressed to a younger generation. Usually a date of around AD 90 is given and accepted as accurate. There is no hint about where John was when he wrote this book. We do know that John spent his later years in Ephesus, so it is reasonable to suppose the letter may have been written from there.

As noted in the lesson material, the purpose of the book is clear and is stated in verses 3 and 4. John wrote to accomplish two purposes. First was that believers might have fellowship with each other. Second was that their joy might be full or complete. The twin attitudes John encouraged were joy and assurance. As we will see, the two are linked so that we will not have one without the other.

From reading the book we see most of those to whom it was written were already believers in Christ. They were worshiping in well-organized churches. But false teachers had crept in and caused some basic troubles that concerned John. To set these troubles right, God inspired John to write these words.

We must always remember that no matter who God used to do the actual work, God alone is the author of the Bible. The details of the writing, although very interesting, should never cause us to lose sight of the fact that we are reading God's Word, not the opinions of John. What we read here is more than good advice; it is the direct revelation of the mind and will of God. This gives weight to the things taught in the Bible that are absent in any other philosophy or writing.

John begins with a long and often elliptical sentence that stretches from verse 1 through verse 4. In this sentence he sets forth the evidence that supports his claim and the twin purpose of the writing. John spoke from personal experience, and he was careful to mention the physical senses that brought him to the conclusion that Jesus is the eternal manifestation of God. John had heard the call and message of Jesus from Jesus Himself. He was an eyewitness to the miracles of Jesus. He touched the Lord personally with his own hands. According to Hebrew Law, this was the confirmation of three witnesses. Hearing, sight and feeling were all working in harmony to show John, and through him others, that Jesus was the Son of God.

Our fellowship and joy rest on acceptance of this simple fact we must accept in faith. But God does not ask us to have blind faith in anything. Jesus, through many infallible proofs, demonstrated that He was exactly who He claimed to be. Jesus spoke in a different way, and He was able to prove everything He said by His actions. No other teacher has ever had such authority and power. John witnessed this personally and declared it in this letter so that all who read it can believe it as he did.

The message John gave is simple and eloquent. God is light and there is no darkness in Him. These two metaphors of good and evil set forth the foundation of truth upon which we can each build a life of fellowship and joy. Remember that one of the first lies that Satan told, as recorded in Genesis 3, was God was not completely truthful. The serpent implied God could lie and God had a secret agenda. God and the Bible are either right or wrong. If we are to be happy, we must accept that they are right. If we attempt to say that there is both right and wrong in the Bible or in God Himself, then we make ourselves gods to judge and separate the two. If we accept the absolute truth that God is light and there is no darkness in Him, then we can build on a sure foundation. These things we accept in faith because without faith it is impossible to please God.

John then began a series of conditional arguments. In this kind of verbal debate, the conclusion is as valid as the truth of the premise. These powerful arguments quickly reveal the fallacies of human reasoning. The obvious implication is that, if we try to think our way to fellowship and joy, we will find neither one. Two of these arguments are mentioned in the lesson today.

One is a contrast in what we profess and what we possess. We are not happy because we keep telling ourselves that we are. What we say must equal what we actually do. When this happens, we are walking in the light and two wonderful consequences follow.

First, we have fellowship with each other because we all have the same foundation for truth in our hearts. Fellowship is always based on truth. Then we have the basis for real and lasting peace and joy. Second, forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ is forgiveness for all sin, not from some sin or most sin. This includes the sins we have already committed, the sins we are committing right now and the sins we will commit in the future. Knowing that our sins are forgiven and that we will go to Heaven when we die is the foundation for permanent and lifelong joy.

Answer Key

Answers given in this section apply to questions in the *High School Journal*.

Start Here

1. As hypercritical people who do not enjoy life
2. No
3. A false and fickle kind of joy

Take a Closer Look

1 John 1:5-7, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Perspectives

1. Foundation
2. Foundation—whatever is built on that foundation
3. The light
4. Truly unhappy people

Building Blocks

Various answers. These can be discussed in class.

Springboard

1. Out of our knowledge and experience with Christ
2. We can never be happier than they are.
3. A real relationship with Jesus
4. No