

Deep Joy

Participant's Guide

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To know deep, lasting joy, we have to truly know Christ.

Sincere Christians universally want to “go deeper” in faith and knowledge of the Scripture. With this in mind, we wanted to create a Bible study that would be exegetically strong and focused on personal spiritual vitality.

For a variety of reasons, 1 John fits the bill. The subject matter is simple and straightforward: truth (right doctrine), obedience (right living), and love (right relationships). The cyclical structure of the book invites deeper reflection on these themes. And the letter’s original purpose was to strengthen and assure new believers.

But spiritual depth isn’t simply about knowledge (a common misconception), but about everyday life and relationships. And where better to begin than reflecting on how to have deeper joy in Christ?

Scripture: [1 John 1:1–4](#)

Based On: [The sermon series “Living Deep” by Bryan Wilkerson](#)

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Part 1 Identify the Issue

If there's one thing that no one wants to be, it's "shallow." No one wants to live a superficial life. Deep is good, right? Friends want to have deep conversations. Philosophers want to think deep thoughts. Coaches want to have a deep bench. Fans want their teams to go deep into the playoffs. Investors are hoping for a deep recovery. Gardeners want their plants to have deep roots.

"Deep" implies substance. If something is deep, it's profound, it's sufficient, it's real, it's enduring. We want to be deep people. We want to live deep lives.

The Book of 1 John is actually a letter from the apostle John to a community of believers, probably in Ephesus. It's a simple book. He doesn't cover a wide range of topics. Instead, John chooses to focus on a few simple truths and drill down into them.

We get the gist of John's message in a couple of verses from 2:24–25, especially as they appear in *The Message* translation: "Stay with what you heard from the beginning, the original message. Let it sink into your life. If what you heard from the beginning lives deeply in you, you will live deeply in both Son and Father."

So with that goal in mind, let's dig into John's letter. Read 1 John 1:1–4.

Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching Point One: Jesus Christ really lived.

Teaching Point Two: John and the apostles personally experienced Jesus Christ.

Teaching Point Three: You can personally experience Jesus Christ too.

Part 3 Apply Your Findings

So John's first lesson is this: You know you're living deep when your greatest joy is experiencing Christ personally and sharing that experience with others. That's why our vision shouldn't be to just go deeper in Christ, but also to get closer to those who know Christ, and to reach wider so others can come to know him.

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Action Point: On your own this week read the entire book of 1 John. Jot down the things that stick out most to you and share them with someone else who you think needs to hear it.

—Study by Bryan Wilkerson, with JoHannah Reardon