

## Deep Truth

Participant's Guide

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*Jesus came to rescue and redeem his creation.*

*Most of us come to realize that what we claim to believe about Jesus has implications for our friends who hold different beliefs. In a world where so many people have such different views, how could it be possible that one view is greater than any others? Is there really only one way—one path—that leads to God? Is believing in God enough? Does what we believe about Jesus make that much of a difference?*

*Our understanding of Jesus is critical to our relationship with God. And these are some of the questions that are addressed in the portion of John's letter that we come to today.*

Scripture: 1 John 2:22; 4:1–3; 4:9–10

Based On: The sermon series "Living Deep" by Bryan Wilkerson

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### Part 1 Identify the Issue

From the first chapter, John connects a deeper life with Jesus and suggests three tests that anyone can apply to his or her own life to determine whether or not he or she is really living deeply.

The first test is the ethical test, and for the last few weeks we've been drilling down on this question: How do you live? Do you have a deep walk—a walk of obedience?

The second test is a relational test: How do you love?

The third test is a doctrinal test: What do you believe? This is the test of our passages today, and what we will discover is that to live the deep life is to be rooted and grounded in deep truth. Deep truth has everything to do with our understanding of who Jesus is.

At the time that John wrote this letter, there was a crisis in the church. There were those who were leading people away from what Jesus taught about himself, and the nature of their false teaching is found in these verses: “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John 2:22); “Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God” (1 John 4:2–3).

These teachers were denying that Jesus was God in the flesh, as he claimed to be. There was a certain brand of teaching at this time that argued that Jesus was really just a person who at the time of his baptism became inhabited by the Spirit of God, but God's Spirit left him before the crucifixion. They believed that for God to connect himself with the material world, human beings, and suffering would somehow diminish his nature—that coming down to earth as a human was beyond his station.

John's reply to this false teaching is clear, definitive, and filled with conviction! To abandon Jesus' claims of divinity is to let go of the possibility of living the life that God has for you. The Incarnation is the deep truth that John urges his followers to keep at the very center of their faith and at the core of their lives.

### Part 2 Discover the Eternal Principles

**Teaching Point One: Through Jesus, God shows us who he is.**

**Teaching Point Two: Through Jesus, God invites us to be with him.**

**Teaching Point Three: Through Jesus, God makes the world right again.**

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### Part 3 Apply Your Findings

What do we do when our friends challenge our belief about who Jesus is, especially when we understand more fully the rescue he provides, not just for us, but for all of humanity and for the world? We find ways to make him known more clearly. We describe more carefully and clearly why he has become so dear to us. We let our love and goodness gain us a voice, and we give testimony through our lives and our words about who he is and what he's done. We learn from Christ who it is that he wants us to be, and we live genuinely in him. We let him lead us to become a part of the solution of a broken world. We faithfully testify that Jesus is the Christ—God made flesh: our greatest hope, and the greatest hope for all the world.

#### Action Points:

- **Share with the group one person you would love to better understand who Jesus is. Pray for that person and for ways to demonstrate who Christ is to them by your words and deeds.**
- **How can you show love and goodness on a daily basis with the hopes of gaining a voice in the world? What new thing might you do? What might you stop doing? Discuss your answers in your group.**

—Study by Tom VanAntwerp, with JoHannah Reardon