



SERIES KEY TEXT: 1 John 5:13 (ESV)

SERIES INTRO

Have you ever tried to look at one of those Magic Eye 3D pictures? I've never been able to find the image in the mess of a picture. In fact, I think that most people are lying when they say they can see something in it.

Here's an example of what I'm talking about.

[Author Note: I showed a Magic Eye 3D picture. The picture was mostly gibberish, however the solution for the picture was two unicorns. I started with image #1, talking about how I tried to find the solution but could never see it. I asked the crowd, without saying anything, to make a symbol or hand signal showing they knew what it was. Several students were able to see the two unicorns without seeing the solution.

Next, I showed the solution. I then had the slides go back and forth between the original and the solution. Because the original and the solution were sized the same on the slide, switching back and forth let them see the solution almost like an overlay would.]

Some of you saw the image right away. I don't know how you did it. Now that you all have seen the solution, some of you are able to see it in the original picture. Not me ... I must have a disability. **Isn't it funny how after you see the answer, it's all you can see? The problem no longer seems that complicated.**

I may not be able to see a Magic Eye picture, but I am a boss at finding Waldo. Anybody else like finding Waldo?

[Author Note: I showed a "Where's Waldo?" picture. It's a complicated image. From the crowd, it really is impossible to make out much of what is going on. After this, I shared about my son, who enjoys these kinds of "finding" books. Describe your own experience with these kinds of books.]

So, let's see who can find Waldo first. Go ahead. Give it your best shot.

My son loves these “finding” books. He has some books that are like *Where’s Waldo?* but with comic book characters. He goes back to them over and over again. They are simpler than this, but the funniest thing about it is, even though he knows where every hidden thing is in the picture, he pretends not to. In reality, his eyes can’t NOT see the answers, but he likes to pretend he’s finding it for the first time—especially if I’m having a hard time finding it.

Has anyone found Waldo yet? Of course you haven’t. Let me show you where he is.

[Author Note: I showed the same image with Waldo highlighted and everything else sort of grayed out. We commented on what he was doing and then went back and forth between the two images a few times.]

Now, focus on just this bottom corner of the picture. You can still see Waldo out of the corner of your eye, can’t you? **No matter where you look at this problem, now that you know the solution, you CAN’T NOT see it. It’s as obvious as the nose on your face. The problem isn’t as complicated as it once was, because the answer is RIGHT THERE.**

For the next several weeks, we’re going to be reading a letter that sort of talks about the same thing. In the Bible, there is a man named John. He was a friend of Jesus, and for about three years, he walked around and did life with Jesus. This is the same guy who wrote the Gospel of John—which is sort of a biography of Jesus from John’s perspective.

John wrote a letter to some newer Christians who were still working out what they believed and why they believed it. We still have a copy of this letter, and it is in the Bible. We call it “First John.”

John gives his reason for writing this letter in 1 John 5:13 (ESV):

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

He says, first, that this letter is being written to those “who believe in the name of the Son of God.” Would we call these people Christians? Yeah, I think this letter was written to a group of Christians.

The reason John gives for writing this letter is so that these young Christians “may know that they have eternal life.” The reason John gives for writing this letter is so that these people, who have already confessed Jesus as Lord, can *know* that they have eternal life. It’s something that they have, but they need to *know* it.

The word “know” here is a little strange.

[Author Note: I didn’t get into all the reasons why this word is strange. You may want to, but I chose not to because of my audience. The word I explained here was *ginosko*, which is “a deep and experienced knowledge.” The word that I found when I looked it up is a form of the word *oida*, which is a more generalized “book knowledge of something.”

I tried to research this more, but the books and commentaries that I pulled didn’t really speak to it much. You may have more luck or just be smarter than me in general.

One thing I did find is that the form of *oida* being used is in the subjunctive mood. The subjunctive mood should be understood, in this case, as conditional. So you MAY KNOW this thing, not because of your own certainty of the actual subject (eternal life, in this case), but because of the certainty of all the other points of knowledge around you. That’s why John goes on with several points of confidence after this verse.

Greek: http://biblehub.com/interlinear/1_john/5.htm

Subjunctive Mood: <http://grammarist.com/grammar/subjunctive-mood/>

For the purpose of teaching my students, I reduced this conversation down to the word REALIZE. The thing is true and knowable regardless of what I’m seeing right now. But it isn’t until we REALIZE this truth that we get to walk in it and be influenced by it.]

John means “know” in the same way we say we know where Waldo is after someone shows us. **The facts haven’t changed, but we now REALIZE something that we didn’t before, and it changes what we see from here on out.**

Let’s play a game. Let’s play “If I’m Being Honest.”

[Author Note: Every student got a glow stick. We turned the lights down as low as we could. A phrase would be shown on the screen. The phrase always began with, “If I’m being honest ...” and if the following statement was true, the student would hold his/her light up. If false, he/she would hide the light.

The slides were as follows. If I’m being honest ...

- ... I am sitting in this room right now.
- ... I am currently bowling on the dark side of the moon.
- ... I went to school today.
- ... I have pooped today.
- ... I did my best work at school this week.
- ... I have actually pooped twice today (2 number 2’s = a number 4).
- ... Doing this “Christianity stuff” is hard sometimes.
- ... I don’t always like religion or religious-acting people.
- ... Sometimes I have doubts about God and/or the Bible.
- ... I really want people to lie to me about their certainty, even when they have some doubts, too.]

Did you guys see when it was bright and when it was dark? You’re not alone. **Remember, John wrote this letter to people just like you so that they could REALIZE the truth—so that YOU could put away your doubts and see life with REAL EYES.**

[Author Note: I shared a personal story here about realizing something and it changing the way I viewed my job and a conversation with my boss.]

Let’s get into our first week of REAL | EYES. Turn to chapter 1 of 1 John.

WEEK 1 KEY TEXT: 1 John 1:5–10 (ESV)

WEEK 1 KEY POINT: If I confess my sins, Jesus will forgive me and cleanse me.

1 John 1:5–7 (ESV)

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have

fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

When John says, “This is the message we have heard from him,” who is the “him” John is talking about? Remember that John was a friend of Jesus. He probably doesn’t mean this in the same way a prophet heard a voice from heaven. He is probably just recalling a conversation he had with Jesus one day by a fire.

John said that God is what? Light. And in God is *not* what? Darkness.

John goes on to say that if we say we are cool with God while we are walking in darkness, we’re lying. However, if we walk in the light, we are in right standing with each other and with God.

Both verse 6 and verse 7 begin with “if we.” This is an invitation to self-evaluate. If you’re being honest, are you walking in the light or walking in the darkness? Or maybe, if you’re being honest, it’s a little bit of both.

Walking in the light means you have nothing to hide. Walking in the light means you have great and open relationships with those around you.

Walking in the darkness is the opposite. The Bible calls it sin. It is when you walking around a little shady, hoping *that thing* isn’t found out. It messes up your relationship with others and with God.

If we’re being honest, how do we see ourselves walking when we self-evaluate?

1 John 1:8 (ESV)

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

John said that in God, there is no darkness. He also says that if we say we have no sin, we’re lying. That means I have a big problem.

If I’m being honest and I self-evaluate, I find that sometimes I’m walking in the light and sometimes I’m walking in the dark. But even a little dark means that I’m in big trouble.

Nobody here is perfect. If you look in the mirror and you see perfection, you're lying to yourself. At least, John calls you a liar. Take it up with him.

What am I supposed to do? Let's keep reading.

1 John 1:9–10 (ESV)

"⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

The Bible says that if I confess my sins, Jesus forgives me and cleanses me. **The Christian life is not about being perfect or pretending you are perfect. The Christian life is about being MADE perfect one step at a time.**

In the conversation of doubt and self-evaluation, there seems to be two groups of extremes.

1. The "Got-It-Togethers" who strut around with their heads held high. They see themselves as perfect and want others to see that, too. John calls these people liars.
2. The "Can't-Get-Rights" who slowly walk with their heads down. They feel like there is nothing they can do to make up for their wrongs. They feel like there is no hope, so why even try. John also calls this group wrong.

If we're being honest, the same Bible that points out all my flaws also points out the solution to my problem. I'm lying if I only latch onto one side of the coin without considering the other.

Do I have darkness? Yes. But in the very next breath, John says that if I confess my sins, God will forgive them. Not only that, but He will also cleanse me.

It's time to start looking at ourselves with REAL EYES and realize the truth we have in Christ!

If we see with REAL EYES, we know that:

- **There is eternal life in Jesus.**
- **If we ask, He forgives.**