

Share prayer requests with the small group. Ask someone to take notes and share the requests with group members after the meeting.



Sermon Study

How Can I Know: By This We Know Who God Is...
1 John 2:1-6

vision

Eastview
Christian
Church is a
fearless church
of Christ
followers whose
ridiculous love
and dangerous
witness are
irresistible.



*Eastview Christian Church small groups provide the optimal environment for the life change Jesus Christ intends for every person. Our groups typically have 8-14 people who **GATHER** together (Hebrews 10:24-25), **GROW** to be more Christ-like (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16), **GIVE** of themselves in various ways (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16), and **GO** on to impact the world around them (Matthew 28:19).*

Gather (your group getting to know each other)

Have you ever had to pull an emergency alarm or break the emergency glass (or been involved in a situation where someone else did)? If so, describe the experience of being in an emergency situation and needing to use a provision that was thankfully there "in case of emergency."

Go
(your group on mission)

Non-believers are quick to label Christians as hypocrites. They're not wrong, of course. As Pastor Baker said last week, we're all hypocrites. But more importantly, we're hypocrites who are trying to get better. As you interact with nonbelieving friends and co-workers this week, be a living example of a Christian who is striving to get better by keeping the commandments of Christ (Matthew 22:36-40) and yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Grow (your group growing as Christ-followers)

Key Scripture

"...we know that we have come to know..." (1 John 2:3, ESV)

Key Word Study

The Greek word *hilasmos* is controversial and hard to describe in contemporary English. Sometimes it is translated as "propitiation," other times as "expiation," but those words often add to the confusion. The best understanding of *hilasmos* might be the idea of a "satisfied justice." In this case, that Jesus' sacrifice satisfied God's requirement for justice, thereby sparing us His wrath.

Discussion

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read 1 John 2:1-6 aloud.
2. This passage begins with two interesting ideas that at first glance might seem inconsistent. To paraphrase John, he says, "Don't sin. But if you do..." How do you feel about this? Is this a free pass to take it easy on ourselves when we fail simply by saying, "Hey, nobody's perfect," or is this a recognition of both God's gracious provision and his perfect standard? Consider Romans 6:1-2 as you discuss the idea of sin in the life of Christians who are called to avoid it.
3. We may be familiar with emergency alarms that say "In case of fire, break glass." In verse 1, John says, "In case of sin, Jesus is our advocate with the Father." Read Hebrews 7:24-25. What do you think it means that Jesus intercedes for us, advocating on our behalf to the Father?

4. This isn't the first time John uses the idea of an Advocate. Flip back and read these verses from John's gospel: John 14:16, John 14:26, John 15:26, and John 16:7. (If you have an ESV translation, the title is Helper, but in the NIV, the title is Advocate.) Discuss the idea that God has given us both internal and external advocates. What does this say about God? What does this say about us?

5. Do you think there's a difference between knowing about God and knowing God? Explain.

6. Read verses 3 and 4 carefully. J. Ligon Duncan writes, "John is not saying that we know God by keeping His commandments. Rather, he is saying we know that we know God by keeping His commandments. Those are two, distinct questions, and we need to keep them distinct. That is, John is not teaching salvation by obedience, nor is he even teaching assurance by obedience; but John is teaching that salvation is evidenced by obedience, and, in turn, that obedience contributes to our assurance." So how do we know that we know God? What do you think that looks like, practically, on a daily basis in your life?

7. Even lifelong Christians can struggle with this concept of knowing, since it seems (on the surface) that knowledge and faith are two different things. Can we have both? What does it look like to both know and have faith?

8. Now read verses 5 and 6 carefully. How do we know that we are united in Him? What do you think that looks like, practically, on a daily basis in your life?

9. As you close, read this wonderfully passionate passage from Paul in Philippians 3:7-11 and discuss how it relates to our text from 1 John. What stands out to you in this passage?

Give
(your group serving each other)

This week, serve your group by finding time to further discuss this idea of knowing God. Specifically focus on fleshing-out these two big principles from this passage in 1 John: knowledge involves obedience, and union involves imitation.