

Read: 1 John 1:5–2:2

Walk Straight!

1 John 1:5–2:2 (selected verses)

God is light; . . . 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, purifies us from all sin.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Before leaving their classroom, the first graders in Mrs. Robinson's class would recite this poem: "When we're lined up straight and tall, mouths shut—eyes forward, hands at our side; then we're ready for the hall." The students were well-trained by their teacher and tried to show their love for her by following those rules.

When Mrs. Robinson's class waited patiently in the cafeteria line or quietly lined up after recess, a bystander would comment on their fine behavior. The students would smile, knowing that when they got back to their classroom, Mrs. Robinson would reward them with a tally mark—getting one tally closer to their goal of an "afternoon movie!"

From time to time, however, a student from Mrs. Robinson's class would not be lined up straight or tall—their mouth would not be closed, and their hands not at their side. This was the opposite of their hallway motto. When that happened, the janitor or another bystander would remark, "Aren't they in Mrs. Robinson's class? They sure aren't acting like it!"

Sometimes, it is easy and looks like fun to be like one of those students wiggling in line or talking when they're not supposed to. How many times have we listened to the world's classroom rules instead of our loving teacher, God's rules?

For example, God's rule: "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy." The world's rule: "Remember your SELF today by sleeping in soundly."

Here's one more of God's rules: "You should have no other gods." The world's rule: "You be you and have no other worries."

When we break God's "classroom rules, what do we deserve? No afternoon movie! Instead a recess in hell that never ends. How horrible! But God is our loving teacher and wants us in his classroom. He sent someone who "walked straight and tall, mouth shut—eyes forward, hands at his side; ready for the hall." Thanks to the perfect student, Jesus, who shed his blood that "purifies us from all sin," we are getting closer and closer to the most beautiful place of heaven!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Explain how to play the game, "*Follow the Leader*." What happens if you don't do exactly what the leader does?
- What makes a good leader? Who is the best leader?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Share at least two rules at your school or at home.
- True or False? "Rules are a good thing." Explain your answer.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of a time you got in trouble for breaking the rules in some way. What was the consequence for it? How did you feel about it?
- Think of a time your friend got in trouble for breaking a rule. What was the consequence for them? Would you have been willing to take the punishment for your friend? Why was Jesus willing to take our punishment?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, sometimes it's so hard to just sit still and listen when I want to wiggle around and say what I want. In that moment, help me follow you. Amen.