Key Words in 1 John

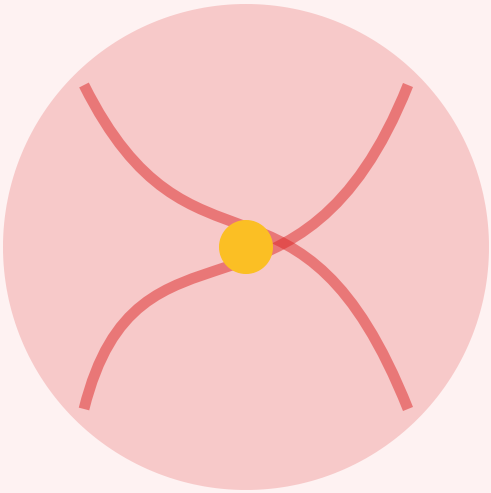
A Study of Greek Word Meanings



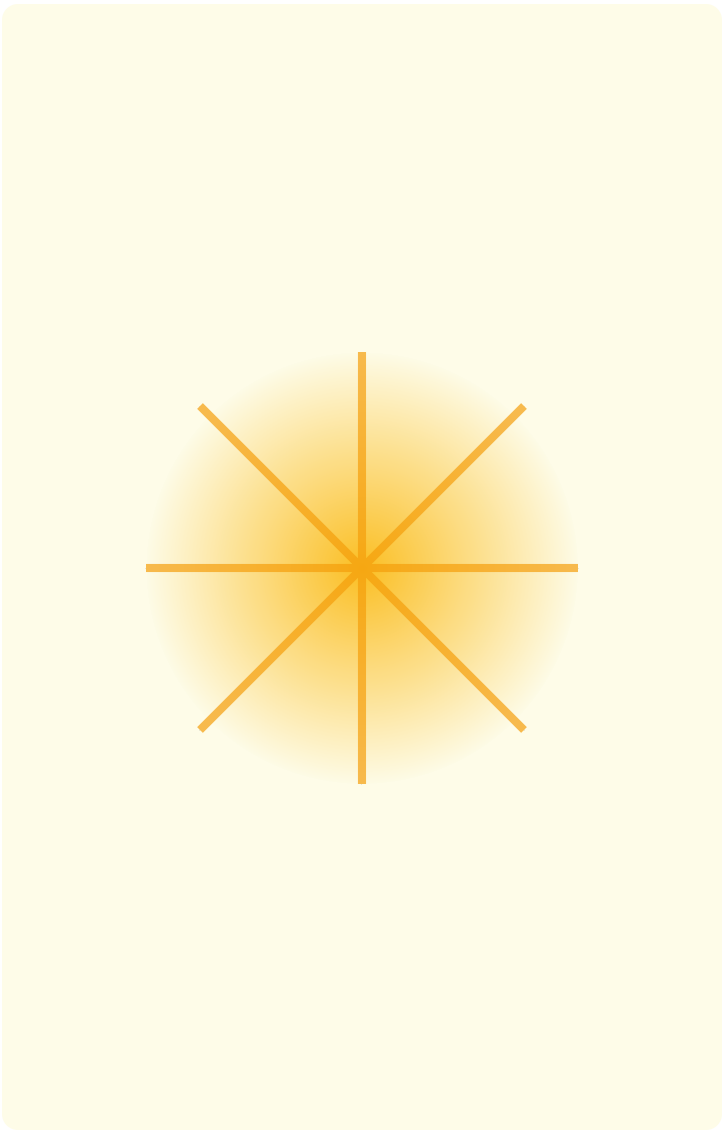
World

Κόσμος (Kosmos)

> *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*
>
> **— 1 John 2:15**



While **Kosmos** can refer to the physical created order, John often uses it to describe the human system of values, priorities, and rebellion that operates in opposition to God. It's the fallen world order characterized by the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." It represents a mindset and way of life that is hostile to God's purposes.



Light

Φῶς (Phōs)

> *"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."*
>
> **— 1 John 1:5**

Phōs signifies far more than physical light. It represents the very nature of God—His absolute holiness, truth, purity, and self-revelation. To "walk in the light" is to live a life that is consistent with God's character and truth, exposed and open in fellowship with Him, where there is nothing hidden.

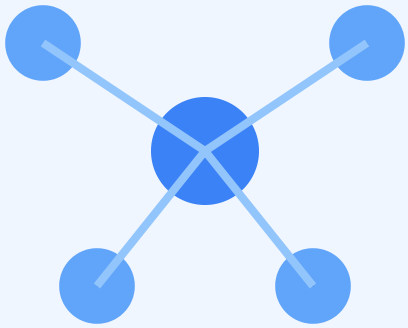
Abide

Μένω (Menō)

> *"Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."*
>
> **— 1 John 2:6**

To **menō** means to remain, stay, or dwell. It is not a fleeting visit but a state of permanent, intimate connection. It describes the believer's relationship with Christ as a mutual indwelling—the believer lives *in* Christ, and Christ lives *in* the believer. This abiding relationship is the source of a transformed life and fruitful ministry.





Fellowship

Κοινωνία (Koinōnia)

> *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..."*
>
> **— 1 John 1:7**

Koinōnia is much deeper than casual friendship. It signifies a partnership, a shared life, and participation in a common reality. For John, it's the shared life that believers have with God and, as a result, with each other. This fellowship is made possible by their common union with Christ and is a direct result of walking in the light.