

1 JOHN CHAPTER 1

This general letter is more like a series of “postcards” verses a general letter and it was not written to a particular church, but to churches of all generations. It was written in Ephesus under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle John around 85 A.D. John was an older man not yet exiled to the Isle of Patmos where he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Revelation. John writes about something he has firsthand knowledge of – he writes about the need of all people to be in relationship with God. Most people understand that the important things in life are not things at all – they are the relationships we have. And the most important relationship we can have is with God through Christ Jesus which occurs when we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart God raised Jesus from the dead; we are saved and in relationship with God. John also highlights in these postcards or general letters God as Light, Love, and Life. The key issue going on during the writing of this letter or post cards was a declining commitment of Christians...something I feel is as relevant today as it was during the time of John’s holy inspired writing. John said the church, due to a **lack of commitment** and **false teaching** was falling away and

compromising their faith. They were heavily influenced by false teachers mainly Gnostics and they primarily believed the body or flesh was evil only the spirit was good; therefore you could do anything in the flesh. Additionally, they also believed in levels of knowledge only certain people could attain. In this remarkable letter, John tells us the truth about relationships and shows us how to have relationships that are real, for both now and eternity.

Vs. 1 - – **“That”** refers to the gospel of Jesus the Christ – He was born of a virgin, temporarily localized in a human body, died on the cross for the sins of all humanity past, present and future; He was resurrected 3 days after being crucified, He now sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven making intercession for us; and He is coming back for His church in the Rapture. John says this truth with *authority* because he was one of the original 12 chosen Apostle and he was one of the 3 who was apart of Jesus’ inner circle. He heard Jesus talk; he walked hand in hand with Jesus so he is a eye witness to what he talking about. In a trial, it is usually one who is an eye witness that is considered the more credible witness. The phrase **“from the beginning”** refers to the fact Jesus who is God the Son (the 2nd member of the Holy Trinity) was from

the beginning...God the Son is Eternal; Jesus stepped out into time to be the *complete Revelation of God for man*. This phrase also means this gospel message has some “stability.” It was developed and it was ordained. The *Gospel of John 1:1* starts out saying “*in the beginning was the word*” – *Genesis 1:1* starts of saying “*In the beginning.*” Therefore, this gospel message is “*stable.*” It does not change like new fads and idealism changes. There are so many new movements in the church – new denominations – there are many church/denomination splits because of new “*man developed*” doctrines hence, John is saying “this” gospel message is a *never changing word in an ever changing world.* The idea is that this eternal subject of John has been **audibly** heard, **physically** seen, **intently studied** (have looked upon), and **tangibly touched** (hands have handled). This idea would have enormous implications for his readers and John was an eyewitness to what occurred.

Vs. 2 – Regarding the phrase “*the life was manifested*” - John used some key words and phrases over and over in his writing for emphasis and one of these words or phrases is “*manifested.*” God revealed (*manifested*) Himself to Moses in a “burning bush” (*Exodus 3:1-14*) and on the cleft of a mountain (*Exodus 33:22*). God revealed Himself to then Saul but

later on Paul with a bright light on the road to Damascus (*Acts 9:3-6*)...God revealed Himself to Ezekiel in a wheel that was inside of wheel (*Ezekiel 1:15-16*). God revealed Himself to Elijah by having a raven bring him bread and water by a brook (*1 Kings 17:4-6*) and through other prophets and miracles but nowhere in time has God manifested Himself more so than in the life of Jesus the Christ. God has revealed Himself in creation (*Romans 1:20*); God has revealed Himself in His word (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*) and God revealed Himself to man by becoming like man (*John 1:14*). Now is it possible for human beings to say that people are eternal? In general of course not; we all have a birth date and a physical death date (unless we're saved and physically alive at the time of the Rapture), but as it relates to the future state of humans we can say we will be eternal – we will live eternally in heaven or eternally in hell (*Hebrews 9:27 – it is appointed for man to die once, but after that the judgment*) in a glorified body.

Vs. 3 – This letter lets us (the church) know we must be engaged in authentic Christian fellowship. *What the polls are telling Christian leaders about millennials is they strongly desire authentic fellowship; they are not a group of people that want to just come to church once a week; they need more!* This verse tells us the purpose of John's declaration

about this eternally existent, physically present, Word of life who is God, yet is a person distinct from the Father, and that is to bring his readers into fellowship with both God and God's people. It's really an oxy-moron to say you love Jesus but hate or don't want anything to do with the church. How many people would have a relationship with someone but that person has nothing to do with your children. Not trying to get ahead of myself but in 1 John 4:20 it says, *"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"* The idea of fellowship is one of the most important ideas in this letter of John's. It is the ancient Greek word koinonia, which speaks of a *sharing, a communion, a common bond and a common life*. It speaks of a living, sharing, loving relationship with another person. Perhaps the 7 most major functions of the church are: Fellowship, Ministry, Worship, Discipleship, Evangelism, Reading and Studying the Word, and Prayer. True fellowship combines both social and spiritual interaction. We can enjoy this fellowship even though we do not understand all the intricacies of the trinity (*i.e. - you can use your eyes even though you don't know every detail of how your vision works*). You can know God and believe in Him as He has revealed (manifested) Himself, even

though you can't fully understand everything about His person or His nature (read [1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). We have fellowship with God through a right relationship with Jesus. Now we oftentimes use the terms [fellowship](#) and [relationship](#) in regards to Christianity as though they are the same word...[relationship](#) is based on "birth" (we are born again once we repent and believe in the Gospel...[fellowship](#) is based on choice (we must choose to live in accordance to the word of God).

Relationship is eternal – it cannot be broken. Fellowship can be broken...it's broken when we sin; and it is restored when we confess and repent. Once one is saved; they are eternally secure (example of a son disrespecting his father...their fellowship is broken but their relationship is eternal...one is birth – the other is a choice).

[Vs. 4](#) – I love that phrase "*that your joy may be full*" - Fullness of joy is certainly possible for the Christian, but it is by no means certain. John wrote with the desire that believers would have fullness of joy. Too many Christians are passive in their loss of joy. They need to realize it is a great loss and do everything they can to draw close to God and reclaim that fullness of joy. *Our joy in the midst of struggle and tribulation is a means of attracting unsaved people to Christ...they will ask you "how can you have joy when layoffs might be coming, or how can*

you have joy when you have been diagnosed with a disease? It is being connected to the True Vine that gives us joy. Only a Christian can have real joy because real joy is based on a living relationship with God. Circumstances do not dictate joy; it's an inside job. The unsaved world cannot give it to us; and it cannot take it away. Even in trials and the storms of life you can have joy because of the hope that is found in the many promises of God. We are branches connected to the true vine.

Now be aware that often time true joy can be birthed out of anguish.

Money, cars, houses, material possessions can give you much happiness but true joy does not come from without but from within...true joy is only that which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit when you surrender to Him and God's way. *If you're down and out – what Scripture passages give you comfort?*

Vs. 5 – We find similar phraseology in the Gospel of *John 1:5-12*. Jesus said He was the light of the world and He commands us to let our light shine so that men may see our good works and glorify the Father who sent Him. God is the only One with no darkness because only God has not sinned. (*I will never forget a lady who came to our church and said to me...I don't sin because I follow the 10 commandments*). God is holy and He is light therefore, those of us who desire to follow Him must also be

holy and shine from His light. This is possible only because of the perfect work Jesus did on the cross. *Saved people can only reflect light...we are not the source of light...we're like the moon in that sense.*

Regarding the phrase God is light and in Him is no darkness at all...that phrase suggests if there is a problem with our fellowship with God, it is our fault. It is not the fault of God because there is no sin or darkness in Him at all. The purpose of light is to bring illumination and if things are going to grow they will need “light” (light of the word).

Vs. 6 – The phrase “walk in darkness” means you are living a *lifestyle of unrepentant sin*. This person until He repents cannot pray effectively (*Psalm 66:18* validates this). Now everyone sins...but those who are saved have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to convict us of our sin and then convince us to confess the sin and repent. *Sin is what the Bible says is sin*...man cannot override what God calls sin and formulate his own set of moral guidelines - *1 Corinthians 6:9-10* is not an *evolving Scripture* nor can Scripture be overruled by the desire of society or the courts of man. What God calls sin is sin; it does not, nor will not change over time. *1 Corinthians 6:9-10* may be one of the best examples of what is sin and it states the potential consequence for those who practice it and do not confess their sin and repent. To ignore what the Bible calls sin is the

personification of “walking in darkness.” Again, if a person has ever committed any of the sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that does not mean they automatically go to Hell...those sins point out a lifestyle that is not in accordance to the word of God...to ignore God’s word is to reject God hence, judgment will come upon you if you do not confess and repent while you are alive on earth. Vs. 9 will address this later. You can tell a tree by the fruit it bears. God commands Christians to *study to show ourselves approved unto Him...* the Bible instructs us to pray, share the Gospel, go make disciples...but are we doing this as a lifestyle? Regarding the phrase “we lie and do not practice the truth” God has no darkness at all according to vs. 5 therefore, if one claims to be in fellowship with God (a relationship of common relation, interest, and sharing), and yet walk in darkness (unrepentant sin), it is not a truthful claim...now the issue in this verse is fellowship, not salvation.
The Christian who temporarily walks in darkness is still saved, but not in fellowship with God until he confesses and repents of sin.

Vs. 7 – The phrase “walk in light” contrasts “walking in darkness” from the previous verse. We begin walking with Jesus in the “sanctification” phase of salvation which lasts until we are Raptured from this earth. To be able to walk in the “light of God” we must first know Jesus. The

“*He*” in vs. 7 is Jesus...No man can come to God except through Jesus (God the Son). God is able to see sinful man through the righteousness of Jesus. Now if we are walking with God who is Light then we can walk with the body which means we can have fellowship. *We cannot have the head (God) but reject the body (the church).* *Something is drastically wrong with people who say they love God or love Jesus but they don't want anything to do with the body of Christ which is the church.*

God does not want you to just attend church on Sundays but not have no other any connectivity with the body (the church) at no other time. You cannot have the head (Jesus) and not want to be bothered with the body (the church). *Imagine being a single parent with children...would you date someone who says he loves and wants you but he will not love nor have anything to do with your children...would that type of relationship work?* Authentic Christian Fellowship is a necessary element of the church. And it is best seen and experienced when our vertical relationship is right with the head then our horizontal relationships with the body can be right. The phrase the *blood of Jesus cleanses*” not only means Jesus’ shed blood on Calvary atones for our sins. The word “*cleanses*” is in the present tense; it means Jesus shed blood on Calvary is still cleansing sin today when we confess and repent of sin. *The blood*

did not just work on Calvary the Blood still works and it is still flowing today! *The blood still works after you get saved.* How many of you since you have been saved has cursed somebody out...how many of you since you have been saved *have lied, lustfully looked at someone; went somewhere you should not have gone...gossiped...*well, I know were in Bible study but praise the Lord the blood still works – the blood still cleanses! In the O.T. blood was a sacrifice – the animal was killed as a sacrifice for sin. Jesus died on the cross once and for all and His blood cleanses us from all sin and its penalty (spiritual death and permanent separation from God with no opportunity to repent); but to experience this we must accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior (*Romans 10:9*) and we *must confess our sins.*

Vs. 8 – Now on the surface, you would say very few people would ever say, they have not sinned. Most people are not taking a verse from the Bible and saying it's not true. What typically happens is that we start comparing ourselves to others and say, well I'm not as bad as so and so; or I might do this, but I don't do that. Abortion and same sex marriage are legal according to the Supreme Court so when people have an abortion – engage in homosexuality and same sex marriage most don't view it in their eyes as sin so they say “they are not sinning” but the Word of God

says it is sin so “It’s Sin.” Some people choose to live together “shack up” and in their eyes because they say they love each other and/or it’s a great financial arrangement and maybe one day they will get married or they may even consider themselves “common law” married so they don’t think they are living in sin because they love each other and are committed to each other. Those type sins represent a compromise – a lack of commitment, they embrace false teaching and false teaching refuses to take sin seriously. There are only two roads...one that leads to eternal life (narrow gate, difficult way, and few find it) and the road that leads to eternal damnation (wide gate, broad way, and many are traveling on it). Our problem in America is we don’t like absolutes; we enjoy multiple choice; we love to live in the “grey.”

Vs. 9 – Regarding the phrase “*If we confess our sins*” - though sin is present, it need not remain a hindrance to our relationship with God – we may find complete cleansing (from all unrighteousness) as we confess our sins. *When we confess our sin, we are willing to say (and believe) the same thing about our sin that God says about it.* *And herein lies a fundamental problem for man; man in some cases want to redefine and/or marginalize some sins.* When Jesus died on the cross every sin we have committed and will commit has been paid in full. That is why John says

we need to confess or acknowledge we have sinned so that our fellowship with Jesus is reconnected. The *Greek* word for confess literally means to agree. The Greek word is “*homo-la-gao*” – homo means same – and la-gao means word or spoken. Thus it means to speak the same thing. So if we confess our sins, that means we agree with God that what God calls sins is sin; so since we transgressed doing what God calls sin, we agree with God and confess it was sin. Now the *Greek* word for forgive here in vs. 9 is a-pha-ie-me, which means “to send away debt.”

When Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:9-13 (vs. 12 in particular – read it from Bible) we see Jesus calling our sins “debt” that can be sent away. That prayer was not taught to unbelievers but to saved people who are people “saved” but still have some *sinner tendencies*...Debt is when you don’t have the money to pay for what you owe. And you accrued the debt because you made a decision knowing you did not have it when you bought it. So that aspect of the disciples prayer is like saying, “Father I owe you, but I don’t have the money to pay it so please send away the debt as I send away the debt of people who owe me.” Now that speaks to forgiveness of “sin” but there is a type of sin that can keep your prayer from being heard in the throne room of grace and mercy and it’s called “iniquity.” Iniquity is blatant sin with your eyes

wide open, sin you know you are committing yet, you do it anyway and you don't confess and repent from it. This is affirmed by **Psalm 66:18**. I suggest the first place we start is to ask God to send His spirit of repentance over you so that you might confess of any sin(s) in your life.

We typically think only of sins like adultery, fornication, murder, theft, etc. But prayerlessness, unforgiveness, sowing seeds of discord among the brethren, pride, covetousness, and gossip many accept and willfully engage in. We are commanded to Go and Make Disciples, but yet there are many claiming to be Christian have never witnessed to anyone nor even attempted to lead someone to Christ. Most claiming to be Christians are discipling no one. And the sad reality its people who fail to do what God commands that are going to hear the words from **Matthew 7:21-23** (**read them**). When we confess of sin **Psalm 103:12** affirms that sin has been removed from us as far as the East is from the West. Now true confession and repentance involves a commitment to strive to not do that same sin over and over. We must pray for strength to break the strongholds, weights, and snares the devil sets up for as as Hebrews 12:1-2 discuss.

Vs. 10 – **Romans 3:23** says what – “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” So anybody who says they have not sinned they are a

liar. Jesus is the only sinless One. This type person who claims to be a Christian loves to apply the word of God to others but not himself. They can sit through worship services, Bible study, and the sermon and never be moved/touched by the Bible teachings. The *32 Psalm vs. 3-4* speaks of when David tried to hide his sins discovered he could not have genuine fellowship with God and *Proverbs 28:13* says, He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.