

"FELLOWSHIP with GOD"

I John 1:1-7
9-16-2026

Introduction: "Fellowship" = koinonia - from koinos = "common;" hence, communion. The word means to share in common with someone else. To enjoy close-knit communion. A sharing together; a close-knit partnership.

***You can experience fellowship with God and believers!**

I. Fellowship is the result of sharing in Christ's LIFE (v. 1-4)
(Experience the Fellowship of LIFE)

II. Fellowship is the result of walking in God's LIGHT (v. 5-7)
(Experience the Fellowship of LIGHT)

A. You cannot enjoy God's fellowship and walk in the darkness at the same time (v. 6)

B. You can enjoy God's fellowship if you live according to God's Light (v. 7)



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Introduction:

I John is the “family epistle” of the New Testament. John is writing so the family of God can be close to each other as brothers and sisters of the same family, and also close to our Father in Heaven. The word *“Father”* is used 13 times; the word *“little children”* is used 11 times. (Teknia & Tekna; Paidia)

v. 3

“Fellowship with us” - A sharing together; a close-knit partnership.
"Fellowship" = koinonia - from koinos = "common;" hence, communion.
The word means to share in common with someone else. To enjoy close-knit communion.
“Two Fellows in a Ship”

“The word indicates the setting aside of private interests and desires and the joining in with another or others for common purposes “ (Rienecker, p. 785).

Date: Approximately A.D. 90 - according to tradition, the aged John writes from Ephesus before his exile to Patmos. He writes to believers (children of God) all over Asia Minor right down through the centuries to you and me.

Writer: John the Apostle.

Evidence:

1. He was an eye & ear witness of Christ’s life (1:1-2)

2. His vocabulary & style of writing bears similarity to the Gospel of John
(EX: the introduction of the gospel and this epistle, referring to Christ as the *“Word”* in the *“beginning”*)

3. The repeated key words and concepts
--*“love”* (33 times)
--*“Son of God”*
--light vs. Darkness
--*“world”*
--*“eternal life”*

Purpose: It is characteristic of John's writing to state his purpose for writing -

Example:

1. His gospel - John 20:30-31 -

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

2. His revelation - Rev. 1:3, 19 -

3 ¶ *Blessed is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

In this epistle of I John, John does not keep us in the dark as to why he is writing: he states the several purposes for writing this epistle:

That believers will have -

1. <u>Fellowship</u> with other believers and with God 1:3

2. Fullness of <u>joy</u> 1:4

3. Freedom from <u>sin</u> 2:1

4. Spiritual <u>discernment</u> (regarding the heresy of Gnosticism) 2:26
"Cerinthus, a former Jew from Egypt, combined Jewish ideas with Gnosticism. He taught that Jesus was the physical son of Joseph and that the 'ageless Christ' was united to Jesus at His baptism and left Jesus before His death" (Hocking, p. 9). The Spirit of God came upon Him at His baptism and left Him at the cross.

And all of this is anchored on the ultimate purpose of I John, which is -

5. <u>Assurance of Salvation</u> - I John 5:13

The word *"<u>know</u>"* occurs over thirty times in this brief five-chapter epistle.

In verses 1-4 we find the fellowship of "life" (the fellowship we share with God and believers when we share in the <u>life</u> of Christ).

In verses 5-10 we find the fellowship of "light" (the fellowship we share with God when we walk in the <u>light</u>).

***You can experience fellowship with God and believers!**

I. Fellowship is the result of sharing in Christ's LIFE (v. 1-4)

(Experience the Fellowship of LIFE)

v. 1

"was" - the verb (imperfect tense) means "was already in existence" not "came into existence" (Ryrie).

Jesus was in existence when creation had its beginning (He is creation's Creator, who is the eternal "I AM").

Verses 1 and 2 describe a balance of:

--Christ's eternal pre-existence (His Deity)
--Christ's historical manifestation (His humanity)

"From the beginning" - From the beginning of time, space, and matter, Jesus was existing.

John 1:1-3 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2]The same was in the beginning with God. [3]All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

"We have heard. . . we have seen" - Perfect tense implying a past action with continuing results. Christ's manifestation to John left an impact on John which would never leave him.

"The impression of Christ being manifested still lasts; it was still ringing in their ears. And they would never be the same again." (Hocking, p. 10)

John had all the evidence available for sense perception. In this one verse, John bears witness to the validity of his testimony regarding Christ. He says: I heard him (with my ears); I saw Him (with my eyes); I touched Him (with my hands).

John gives such credible testimony about Christ so as to counter the Gnostic heresy which denied Christ's physical incarnation. They taught that matter was evil and therefore it was impossible for deity to wrap Himself in humanity. God, they said, could not unite with anything material such as a body They taught, as did Docetism, that Christ only appeared to have a body but was a ghost or phantom. Those who believe such are called Antichrists (4:3). The virgin birth is an essential doctrine.

John heard Christ's authoritative words (he hears so much that if he wrote it all down, the Library of Congress couldn't contain all the truth!).

John saw Christ (he witnessed His lifestyle and miracles).

"Looked upon" = *theaomai* (akin to "theater") - to view intently; the verb expresses the calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator (Rienecker, p. 784).

John touched Christ.
--He laid his head on Christ's bosom
--He touched His hands and side after His resurrection (Luke 24:39)

The verb ***"handled"*** is the same Greek term used to describe the way in which blind Isaac handled Jacob to see if he was Esau (in the LXX, Gen. 27; cp. Lk. 24:39).

"The Word of life" - Christ is one who said the word and life came into existence.

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3).

We owe our existence to Jesus Christ! He is our Creator .

Col. 1:16 - *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

John 1:3 - *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Heb. 1:2 - *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

v. 2

The WORD (Jesus Christ) is …
the One who is life,
who created life (where there was nothing),
who sustains life,
who imparts spiritual life (where there was spiritual death),
who graciously gives eternal life (where there was mortality and corruption),
who raises the body unto the resurrection of life (where there was physical death)
who gives "abundant life" here and now to all who know Him (John 10:10)

To look at Jesus was to look at life (life's Creator, Sustainer, regenerator, and Resurrector)!

v. 3

"<u>We</u> have seen"- John in humility refers to himself in first person plural, joining himself with the other apostles; in no way does he exalt himself above the rest. Rather, he identifies himself with the others who heard, saw, and touched Christ.

"<u>Declare</u> we unto you´- this is the main verb and the main clause of verses 1 - 3. It refers to an authoritative announcement.

This message about Christ has practical ramifications.

"<u>That</u> ye also may have fellowship" - the <u>purpose</u> for John's testimony about the person of Christ was so that we might have a common basis around which to fellowship. People get together over common interests; our common interest is Christ.

This "fellowship" exists despite any barriers society or fallen human nature might erect.

Despite differences in age, sex, race, skin color, culture, etc.

Our "fellowship" with each other is not based on money or material interests, nor mere social agendas, etc., but we are unified around common doctrinal convictions regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Our fellowship does not consist of unity (joining hands) around nothing; our unity is based around our unity with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

For a person to be without a relationship with God is to be without the necessary relationship which binds us to each other. (Did you ever notice how difficult it is to have a close-knit relationship with someone who is outside of the family of God? The common bond is not there. *2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

You either have fellowship or you don't; you either commune with God or you don't.

"Father. . . son" - You cannot have fellowship with one without having fellowship with the other.

EX: the person who said, "I believe in God, not Jesus Christ."

John 5:23 - *23 That all men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

"Our fellowship is <u>with</u> (meta) the Father...<u>with</u> His Son" - not a mere enjoyment of His company with us, but a sharing in common with other believers of the eternal life which is in the Lord.

v. 4

We have not only fellowship but <u>joyful fellowship</u> around the Person of Christ.

God intends that His children have "<u>joy</u>" (not gloom, depression, and sinful sorrow).

Not just "joy" but "<u>full</u>" joy.

All who know Christ will know joy . . .

"Know Christ - know joy; no Christ - no joy.

"Write. . . joy" - Joy comes in measure to the degree that you know and believe what God has <u>written</u>!

(If we don't read and hear God's Word on a continual basis, we are forfeiting the joy God intends us to have!)

To have joy means to have a heart that is glad and contented despite circumstances (cp. Ja. 1:2).

Joy is the result of <u>faith</u> in God's Word and is a production (*"fruit")* of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

John 15:11 - *11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that* your joy might be full.

Christ came that we might have life and have it more <u>abundantly</u> (Jn. 10:10).

In His *"presence is fulness of joy"* (Ps. 16:11).

II. Fellowship is the result of walking in God's LIGHT (v. 5-7)

(Experience the Fellowship of LIGHT)

*One Condition: You must walk in the light

V. 5

John is saying, This "message" (report) is not my idea, not my conception about God, but it is God's message (Christ's message) about Himself, and about how to be right with Him.

"Declare" = lit. to re-announce, announce again. In other words, John is saying, "We have told you in the past, and now tell you again "that God is light"."

Some lessons are worth repeating. Though many truths are very familiar to some Christians, we need to be stirred up by being reminded (II Pet. 1:12-13).

John frequently identifies the attributes of God by the phrase, "God is ___"

Examples:

John 4:24 - "God is Spirit"
I John 4:8 - "God is love"
I John 1:5 - "God is light" (holy)

God is "light" - John begins this epistle of I John the same way as he began the Gospel of John - namely, in pointing out the fact that God (the logos) is light (John 1:4-9, 8:12).

God is light. The light that His glory emits cannot be seen by mortal man. He dwells in unapproachable light (I Tim. 6:16).

"No darkness at all" - Greek, a double negative, emphasizing the absolute brilliance of God.

It was Plato who said, "Light is the shadow of God."

"Sin is darkness" and God is totally set apart from sin. He is holy, holy, holy (Is. 6).

A. You cannot enjoy God's fellowship and walk in the darkness at the same time (v. 6)

"Fellowship" = koinonia - from koinos = "common;" hence, communion. The word means to share in common with someone else. The word describes the relationship between at least two people whereby they can talk together, walk together, work together, etc. It is a word that denotes mutuality and intimacy. To be in fellowship with God means to be on "talking terms" to Him; to be "right with Him," to be receiving blessings from Him; to be serving Him -- simply to be close to Him.

Verse 6 explained:

If someone says, "I am presently enjoying [present tense] fellowship with God," yet they are living lives of disobedience to God's Word, they are lying to themselves [middle voice] and are not practicing the truth of God.

According to verses 6-7, one is either walking in darkness or light. There are no gray areas with God.

B. You can enjoy God's fellowship if you live according to God's Light (v. 7)

God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9).

We are children of light (I Thes. 5:5).

"IF we walk..."

Note: Fellowship with God is conditional (it is contingent on our walk).

[Note the "ifs" in v. 7 and 9 - showing that both fellowship and forgiveness are conditional - that is, they are dependent on certain conditions being met.

"If we walk" - John includes himself (cp. "if we - v. 6, 8, 9, 10).

The fact that the Apostle John includes himself shows that even he was not exempt from conditional fellowship.

All Christians (even the most prominent) need to walk right to be right with God.

"If we walk" = present tense - lit. If we are walking. Your fellowship with God today depends on your walk with God today.

Having walked in the light in the past does not guarantee fellowship with God in the present.

Even Paul, after having faithfully served Christ in the past, feared more than anything being a castaway - that he should fail God in the present.

To walk in the light is: to walk according to the Bible; to walk in such a way that you would not be ashamed of what you are doing; to be honest with yourself (not covering up sin, but bringing it out in the open before God-v.9)

"As He is in the light" - the light we must walk in is the same light (standard of holiness) that God walks in.

The only standard for true "light" is the Bible, God's holy Word.

"Fellowship one with another" = God and the Christian.

NOTE: Though this verse is speaking about fellowship with God, believers only have good fellowship with other believers as they are walking in the light.

Not only does walking in the light guarantee fellowship, but it guarantees daily cleansing from the sins we commit.

Walking in the light is not speaking about a sinlessly perfect walk; it is speaking about the overall emphasis and desire of your life. The way God measures walking in the light is not by the number of self-imposed, petty, legalistic rules you keep, but a heart that longs after God and His righteousness. For these people God grants daily cleansing.

--The means of God's cleansing: the blood of Jesus, i.e. His efficacious work on Calvary.

--The scope of God's cleansing: all sin (cp. v. 9b)

The shed blood of Jesus not only has power to save, but to sanctify.

The shed blood of Jesus not only cleansed us judicially (forensically) so that we can be saved eternally, but it is efficacious to cleanse us daily so we can live a life that pleases God.

Sin keeps us from fellowship with God; therefore, we should hate it in our lives.

Evangelist Billy Sunday said: "I'm against sin. I'll kick it as long as I've got a foot. I'll fight it as long as I've got a fist. I'll butt it as long as I've got a head. I'll bite it as long as I've got a tooth. And when I'm old and fistless and footless and toothless, I'll gum it to death until I go home to glory!"