

1 John 1:1-10

Get out of the dark and practice the truth

Background of 1 John

Author: John

Date: Between AD 85 and 95 – about 50 years after Christ's Death and resurrection, and after the huge persecution of Christians by Nero.

Reason 1 John was written: To combat the early form of Gnosticism. False teachers had risen up to capitalize on the success of Jesus. They twisted the teachings of Jesus in order to gain a following. Basically, where all matter is evil and only the spiritual is divine. This led to a rejection of morality and a focus on "special knowledge." This special knowledge, that only a small amount of people can have, is how you achieved salvation. There could be no fellowship with God when you were currently in your own body. The Greek word for knowledge is *Gnosis* which is where Gnosticism came from. Many other NT letters were written to also combat this heresy.

5 purposes for writing 1 John:

1. That we may have fellowship 1:3
2. That we may have joy 1:4
3. That we may not sin 2:1
4. That we may not be deceived 2:26
5. That we may know we are saved 5:13 – Wiersbe

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Fellowship with Jesus produces joy

John mentions that he has seen Jesus 4 times in four verses. The introduction to this letter was directed at the false teachers of Gnosticism who did not believe that God's son could live in an earthly, sinful, created, body. Some believed that the body was a spirit made to look like a human body, where others believe that the Christ's spirit embodied a man named Jesus and left before he died on the cross. So John kept emphasizing the fact that he actually had seen and touched Jesus with his own hands!

v. 1 – The Word of life – everything was created through Jesus, which was spoken into existence. In Genesis 1 it says, Then God said – hence the word. The Word of life was God's revelation of His purpose through the created order. Then the Word came through the OT prophets and finally through a man...Jesus.

John 1:14 - So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

v. 2. – John explains that he saw Jesus, unlike the false teachers.
The words used here are to point to the physical reality of Jesus, not some spirit.

v. 3 – 3 types of fellowship here – Others, Jesus, and the Father

1. Jesus – Salvation - Gospel

2. Others – who are walking in the light as well (accountability/support to live in the light)

3. God the Father – receiving love from the Father (Abiding in the father)

Faith in Jesus Christ “transfers one from the realm of death to life, from darkness to light, and this life that one now possesses through faith makes its presence known by means of the love that a Christian has for his fellow Christians.” New American Commentary pg. 57

Hence you move from death to life when you move from dark to light because you have faith in the WORD OF LIFE!

v. 4 – One of the main goals of this letter is to have a complete and full joy. This joy is based on our understanding of who Jesus is and our response to sin.

A kind of selfish statement coming from a pastor – **3 John 4** – I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.

This joy comes from abiding in Christ **John 15:4** - Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.) Result = **John 15:11** - I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

This joy can never be taken away from a true believer – **John 16:22** - So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.

But as we saw in verse 3 – if you truly plant yourself in God and a local body of believers (church) that joy is always there. There is a difference between joy and happiness.

Live in the light by practicing the truth

Light suggests the idea that God is open and honest, that he reveals truth. Light also represents goodness and purity in a moral sense. There are no shadows or dark sides to God; he is perfect and free of sin.

v. 5 - Back in Genesis 1 Light represented order while Darkness symbolized chaos. Throughout Scripture the contrast of light and dark represents how humanity acts. Light refers to moral purity while darkness refers to immorality. Also, this description helps us understand what sin looks like. We know that light helps us see and darkness covers things. **Psalms 119:105** – Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. **Ephesians 5:8-9** - For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! ⁹ For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

v. 6 – “practicing the truth” we can sit in church, say we believe in Jesus and never actually practice the truth. We are lying to ourselves and are living in darkness, apart from the light, which is God. We wonder why we don’t have peace, joy, forgiveness and instead we have bitterness, anger, envy.

v. 7 – walk in the light – To walk in the light means to be open and honest, to be sincere. *Sine and cera* (Latin) without wax. Wiersbe page 23.

We have sin, but God can cleanse us from that unrighteousness.

The false teachers were claiming that since all matter, which included our bodies, was bad and sinful, they could act however they wanted if they had this special information. Because when they had this special revelation they had no sin. Almost sounds like reaching enlightenment. But we know what Roman 3:23 says - for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If you say that we have not sinned you are calling God a liar.

v. 8 – Even though we will never reach perfection on this earth, a changed life is **2 Corinthians 5:17** - . This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

What we do know is that we can be free from the penalty and the oppressive power of sin. But the presence of sin will always be in this world.

v. 9 – Just like a person cannot get rid of cancer in their body on their own, we cannot remove sin from our lives. We have to continually confess our sins and repent from them. This helps us to always recognize who we are in relation to who Jesus is. We can always trust that God will forgive us because of the grace that was given to us on the cross.

Fellowship with God only occurs when sin is confessed. Then you experience God's faithfulness and righteousness in that forgiveness. Because of Jesus' blood that was spilled on the cross, we are seen as sinless in the sight of God and are redeemed back into fellowship with Him. PTL!

v. 10 – The false teachers of the day claimed that the only way to have fellowship with God would require someone to be sinless. John was stating that they were deceiving themselves and was making God out to be a liar. "Sinlessness only comes by virtue of life in Christ alone. It cannot be located merely within themselves." New American Commentary pg. 74

So What

John was making sure that the followers of Jesus knew that sin was real and a part of life whether they liked it or not. But, God had a plan and a promise. The promise was that in order to have fellowship with Jesus, other believers and God we have to live in the light. John explains that we are not free from sin, but through the blood of Christ we are forgiven of that sin and cleansed from all of it when we confess it.

Now What

Many of us want this joy and fellowship with God that John talks about here but many times we deceive ourselves by thinking that we are good to go once we believe in Jesus. We think that once we are saved and know we are going to heaven, we can coast in our walk with God. But John is trying to tell people here that yes you are saved but you still sin! That sin breaks your fellowship with God and people. He says that you are living in the dark because you think you have this joy. But when tough times come you don't turn to God you turn to yourself and figure out why you can't pull yourself out. That's because you are trying to guide yourself through the darkness.

How do you have this joy that helps you when times are tough, that joy that relies on the strength that only God gives? It is when you practice the truth (v. 6). When we read what the Bible says,

go to church, come to BCM and not practice the truth that we hear and read we are only deceiving ourselves.

Sin is an obstacle to joy.

Story of A – A can't feel God, feels far from Him, is having a hard time believing in Him. Constantly does things that cause her to live in the darkness, God penetrates the darkness with His light to reach her, but she won't come out of it, then she complains when the light shines on her.

John 3:19-21 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.

When we practice the truth we learn from reading and hearing the Word we can live in the light, which means we have the joy that comes with abiding in Christ. What's interesting is that this light we have doesn't contain itself within us. In fact, when we have this true joy and light people notice and want a part of it. Then we can truly begin to disciple other people in the truth that we now know! Then we can see hundreds of people know Christ who would've never been able to, because God chose you when you decided to live in the light, instead of the darkness.

Get out of the dark and practice the truth!