

## Walk in the Light 1 John 1:7

### Introduction

The important things in life are not things at all – they are the relationships we have. God has put a desire for relationship in every one of us. John shows us in this remarkable letter how to develop relationships that are real, for both now and eternity. John begins in verse one by pointing out the center of perfect relationships is Jesus Christ.

Verse 1 says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—” (1 John 1:1-2 NKJV)

The beginning John writes about is not the beginning of creation; it’s the beginning before there was anything when all that existed was God. John takes us back to eternity past to meet the One who existed before the beginning of creation. Jesus is the One which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled.

Jesus is the eternal One who came to earth, whom John (among others) personally experienced this eternal One. John says this eternal One can be known because He has revealed Himself to us. He says, “I heard Him! I saw Him! I studied Him! I touched Him!” John says his life was manifested, meaning it was made actually and physically real. John tells us these things as an eyewitness.

### I. Fellowship with God

In verse 3, John invites us to develop a relationship with the Eternal One. He writes, “that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3 NKJV)

You can see with your own eyes even though you don’t know every detail of how your vision works. And it’s equally true that you can enjoy God’s fellowship even though you do not understand all the intricacies of the Trinity. You can know God and believe in Jesus as He reveals Himself to you, even though you don’t understand everything about His person or nature.

We also know those who fellowship with one another share with each other. And Jesus makes all the resources of Heaven available to those who develop a relationship with Him. It’s true; you really can have a living, breathing relationship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only our Savior but also our friend and our closest relationship.

The kind of relationship John described is only possible because Jesus is the Eternal One. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have agreed together to let us into their relationship of love and fellowship. You can't just add Jesus to your life. You can only enter into a relationship with Jesus. We share our life with Him, and He shares His life with us.

The first thing John points out is the fellowship God's people have with each other because it is often through the fellowship of other believers that a person is introduced to a relationship with God. Most of us first encounter God through a relationship we have with a person who is a Christian.

John says that Jesus is the Eternal One. He is eternally existent, physically present, the Word of Life, and truly God, yet distinct from the Father. Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah. In verse four, John talks about the results of this relationship. He says, "And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1:4 NKJV)

The result of fellowship is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11 says, "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore." (Psalms 16:11 NKJV)

This kind of joy is an abiding sense of optimism and cheerfulness based on God, as opposed to happiness, which is a sense of optimism and cheerfulness based on circumstances. Jesus told His disciples the night before His crucifixion that He wanted fullness of joy for them – even knowing that the cross was directly in front of them. Fullness of joy is certainly possible, but it is by no means certain. John wants believers to have fullness of joy. The Christian's joy is assaulted on many fronts; external circumstances, moods, emotions, or sin can all take away our joy. But Christian joy is not found in the things of this world. John is writing about a relationship of fellowship and love that we can share with God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ.

- So, John begins with Jesus as the eternal God, who was before all things.
- He tells us that Jesus as God was physically manifested and that he and others could testify to this as eyewitnesses.
- He tells us that Jesus as God is the Word of Life, the Logos.
- He tells us that we may have fellowship with God and that we are often introduced into this fellowship by God's people.
- He tells us that Jesus is the eternally existent God, the *Word of Life*, who was physically present with the disciples.
- He tells us that Jesus is God the Son.
- He tells us that fellowship with Jesus leads to fullness of joy.

These first four verses give us enough on which to live our whole Christian life.

## II. Turn From Sin

John also says we must deal with sin to maintain our relationship with God. In verse 5, he writes, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5 NKJV)

John isn't making this up; this is God's message about Himself, which John now reveals to us. Our relationship begins to develop as our understanding of God increases.

John starts with the simple understanding that God Himself is light, and light by definition has no darkness at all in it; for there to be darkness, there must be an absence of light. Another way of saying that God is perfect is to say that God is light. One writer says, "LIGHT is the purest, the most subtle, the most useful, and the most diffusive of all God's creatures; it is, therefore, a very proper emblem of the purity, perfection, and goodness of the Divine nature." (Clarke)

If there is a problem with our fellowship with God, it is *our* fault, not the fault of God, because there is no sin or darkness in Him at all. Verse 6 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:6 NKJV)

First of all, John deals with the false claim to fellowship. Some people think they have, or try to claim they have, a relationship with God that doesn't really exist. Some Christians are not even aware of their true condition. Yes, they are saved and have repented of their sins, but they don't walk in the light. They're saved, but they still do not live in true fellowship with God. John writes about this as a walk in darkness, which indicates a pattern of living. This is not an occasional lapse but a lifestyle of living closer to darkness than to the light.

John says it is not a truthful claim to say you fellowship with God when you're really walking in darkness. Fellowship is a relationship of common interest and sharing. Believers joined together in fellowship will pray, worship, praise, and encourage each other to grow in Christ and walk in the light. Again, the issue John is addressing is fellowship, not salvation.

It is possible for a Christian to still be saved and yet walk in darkness. They are still saved - but not in fellowship with God. John calls statements made that are not true - lies! Today we call these lies - my truth! The world says, "I have my truth, and you have your truth." Truth is all relative to your situation. But Jesus said, "I am the truth," and the Bible clearly tells us God's truth is greater than any individual's feeling about it.

The Bible tells us that we must turn away from walking in the darkness of this world if we hope to walk in fellowship with Christ and remain free of our sins!

### III. Walk in the Light

There is a great blessing to walking in the light. Verse 7 says, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7 NKJV)

To walk in the light means to live an obedient life without harboring sin or resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this side of eternity, sinless perfection is not possible. But we can still walk in the light by being obedient to follow what the Holy Spirit teaches us. "Walking" implies action, continuity, and progress. God is active and walking, which means you will also be active and walking if you have fellowship with Him.

John also wants to make it clear that Christians who walk in the light enjoy fellowship with each other. If we do not have fellowship with one another, then one or both of us are not walking in the light. Believers in right relationship with God will also be in right relationship with each other.

And as we walk in the light, we also enjoy the continual cleansing of Jesus. This is another indication that John doesn't mean sinless perfection by the phrase walk in the light; otherwise, there would be no need to cleanse sin in this ongoing sense. We need continual cleansing because Romans 3:23 says we continually sin and fall short of the glory of glory. This continual cleansing is available through the shed blood of Jesus.

It doesn't mean the actual drops of His literal blood, but by His death on the cross in our place. That's why we say the blood of Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all our sins – past, present, and future. The work of Jesus on the cross sufficiently deals with the guilt of our sin. But it also deals with the stain of sin, which hinders our continual fellowship with God.

We need to come to God often with the simple plea, "cleanse me with the blood of Jesus." Of course, we have been cleansed before, but we need to be continually cleansed to enjoy continual fellowship. As a believer, my spirit is saved the moment I give my life to Jesus. However, my mind is being saved! It has been an allied force with this world and must be transformed. And my body – well, there's no hope for this sinful flesh! But, thank God, He's going to give us a new glorified body.

Because of Jesus, God forgives all of our sins.

- The sin we inherited from Adam,
- the sin we committed as kids,
- the sins of our growing up;
- sins against our father,
- sins against our mother,
- against our brother and sister;
- sins against our husbands or wives,

- against our children;
- sins against our employers or our employees,
- sins against our friends and our enemies;
- lying, stealing, cheating,
- adultery, swearing, drugs,
- alcohol, promiscuity, murder,
- sins that haunt us every day,
- sins we didn't even know we committed.

Yes, all sin can be cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

Sin hinders fellowship. But Jesus' blood solves sin's problem and opens the way to fellowship with God. You can't come to fellowship with God through philosophical speculation. You can't come to fellowship with God through intellectual education. You can't come to fellowship with God through entertainment. You can't come to fellowship with God through scientific investigation. You can only come to fellowship with God by dealing with your sin problem through the blood of Jesus.

The only sin that cannot be cleansed by the blood of Jesus is the sin of continuing to reject Christ's blood as payment for your sin.

## Conclusion

As we walk towards the light, the sins we could not see because of the darkness around us become quite visible. We recognize the presence of sin, which brings us to the confession of sin, and closer to Jesus for the cleansing from sin.

John is writing this letter to Christians, so look at what he says in verse 8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10 NKJV)

John has introduced us to the idea of walking in the light and being cleansed from sin. But he did not for one moment believe that a Christian can become sinlessly perfect. John says, "If you think you are without sin, you have deceived yourself, and the truth is not in you."

Few people today think they are sinlessly perfect, yet not many think of themselves as sinners. We need to realize that victory and forgiveness come from saying, "I am a sinner – even a great sinner – but I have a Savior who cleanses me from all sin."

When we confess our sin, we are willing to say (and believe) the same thing God says about our sin. Confession is an ongoing process of life transformation. The one who confesses his sin is the one who agrees with God about how terrible his sin is. Our sins are not forgiven *because* we confess; we are forgiven because our punishment was put upon Jesus, and His blood cleanses us.

In the context of John's teaching, confession is still vital to maintain our fellowship with God. As God convicts us of sin that hinders our fellowship with Him, we must confess it and receive forgiveness and cleansing for our relationship with God to continue without hindrance.

Treat God truthfully, and he will treat you truthfully. Make no pretensions before God, but lay bare your soul, let him see it as it is, and then he will be faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."  
(Spurgeon)

The promise of 1 John 1:9 should lead us *out of* sin, knowing that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and deliver us from the wrath we deserve. Since God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, we can be sure that the person who commits sin is not in fellowship with God. If we say that we have not sinned, we deny the presence of sin and are self-deceived because we are denying God's Word.

The idea that His word is not in us is related to the fact that Jesus is the Word of life (1 John 1:1); if we refuse to see sin in us, we show that Jesus is not in us. "No man was ever kept out of God's kingdom for his confessed sinfulness, but many are kept out for their supposed goodness." (Trapp)

There are great blessings and benefits promised to the person who walks in the light. As we walk in the light, we learn how to reflect His character. Failure to walk in the light leads to darkness and loss of spiritual understanding. Jesus said, "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. (Luke 11:35 NKJV)

When we walk in the light, we experience freedom from the powers of evil. This year, be strong and courageous and walk in the light! Start to distance yourself from the darkness around you and within you and begin to experience a new and fresh illumination of Jesus Christ in your life. There has never been a greater time than right now to walk in the light!