

1 John 1:1-10

Fellowship with God

Image Church // First John: Week 1

Introduction

Good morning Image Family!

- If you're a guest with us, we're glad you're here this morning!

If you have your Bible go ahead and turn to 1 John... If you get to Revelation, you've gone too far...

We're kicking off a series where we're going to be walking through the book of **1 John**...

Any idea who you think might have written it?!? **John**

- John was one of the **12 disciples**...
- He wrote the **Gospel of John**...
 - Where we find he's the one whom Jesus loved lol...
- Well, after the resurrection of Jesus, and after Jesus had ascended into heaven, John left Jerusalem, where everything went down with Jesus, and went to the city of **Ephesus**, where he would have done ministry in and around the church in Ephesus. *Which is in modern-day Turkey...*
- And somewhere around **90 AD**, John writes this letter that's more like a sermon, to the church in **Ephesus** and likely all of the churches surrounding **Ephesus**...
 - Revelation 2 John would address the churches in this same religion, so likely the same is intended with this letter as well...

And the backdrop is this, there was a rise in false teaching being propagated in this religion...

Probably that of **Gnosticism**... Which, in essence, is the belief that **salvation comes from within through spiritual knowledge and enlightenment**...

- And what was happening through this was that Christian ideas were being pirated and manipulated down to a personal inner experience, as opposed to a redemptive work of God... ¹

And whether it was **Gnosticism** or another sect of false teaching, what we know is that there have been people that have denounced the validity of the work of Jesus and walked away from the faith...

And in the midst of that reality or confusion surrounding salvation, John writes this letter...

*There was a Canadian guy in the 1900's named **Charles Templeton**...²

- As a boy, faith wasn't a part of his life until, at the age of 19, while he was still living at home, he heard his mom talking about the joy her newfound faith had brought her...
- And this sent him on this journey where he began to take inventory of his life...

And he said, in his words, **suddenly [my life] seemed empty and wasted...**

- So he goes to his room and kneels by his bed, where he says he was **overcome with a sense of enormous guilt**.
- And then he says this (quote) *It may have been minutes later, or much longer, there was no sense of time, but I found myself... at the center of a vast emptiness. . . .In a moment, a weight began to lift, an ineffable warmth began to [pass through my entire body]. It seemed that a light had turned on in my chest and its refining fire had cleansed me.*

¹ Helpful resource and also references connected to this section can be found at TGC, Introduction to 1 John.

² Credit for this illustration/connection goes to Curtis Andrusko, *Deceived or Disciple?*.

Wow, sounds intense, right?!? Well, this experience led him into ministry, where he became a traveling evangelist preaching at rivals to **10's of thousands of people...**

Along the way, he convinced another guy to join him. You may have heard of this guy, his name was **Billy Graham...**

Now the crazy thing is that Templeton was one of the most gifted and popular evangelists of the 40s and 50' surpassing that of even **Billy Graham** in his recognition...

But here's the question, **why haven't you heard of him?!?**

Well, unfortunately, later in his life, he came to a place where he felt like the Bible was outdated, so he renounced his faith and became an atheist...

Heartbreaking right?!? I mean, you hear this, and you're like, **what?!?** *How did this happen?!?*

I want to go back to what Templeton calls his conversion moment, and I want you to see something...

- Templeton described it as **"A weight lifted. Indescribable warmth. A fire that cleansed."**
- What's missing from his 'conversion experience'?? Jesus. Repentance. Belief. Faith.

What Templeton had was an **emotional spiritual experience...** Not genuine faith in the person and work of Jesus...

And my question is, **how many in this room are on the same path as Templeton?**

- How many have a similar story, where your claim to Christianity comes from a one-time emotional experience that you had?
- *How do you know that you're really saved?*

How do you know if your experience with God was real?

How do you know that you know God?

How do you know God loves you?

What does it look like to know and love God?

This is what the book of **1 John** is all about...

1 John 5:13 says: **I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. [Reference]**

John's going to give us assurance in our faith, and he's going to show us what true faith in action looks like...

Are You ready to dive in?!?

1 John 1-2:6

¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—² that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³ what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

What was from the beginning: *This is big... Connecting back to Gen. 1:1... What He's pointing to is the reality that Jesus is God...*

*He's eternally existed as The Word of God, John shows us this in John 1, and He's eternally existed with the **Father** and the **Spirit**...*

- Beauty of the Triune God of the Bible 1 God, existing in 3 distinct persons...

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father...*

We have seen this reality...

- We have witnessed God coming down!
- This is a first-hand account...

4 out of 5 sense here: *I would imagine it's fair to say they smelled Him too... Might have been wired to say that though!*

Illustration: Have you ever heard a second or third-hand story...

- I had a friend... uh oh!
- My friend knew a guy...

It's like the game Telephone you ever played it?!? *I kicked rocks... The pink elephant wears socks... you know what I mean...*

This is not the case here... This is the real deal, 1st hand account of God coming down to us to do what we couldn't do for ourselves...

Verse 4:

⁴ We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Let me ask you this, Christian, what brings you joy??

What brings John and the other Apostles joy is others experiencing Jesus and walking in the truths of Jesus...

Is that true for you?

Here's where I think the gap often is in this... You can't experience the joy of others knowing and following Jesus if you haven't first experienced the joy Jesus brings you!

I think we so often miss the joy of Jesus in our own lives...

Verse 5:

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him.

A couple of things that we need to see here. The first is the ***perfection of God.***

- Absolutely no darkness in Him...
- Radiates Goodness...

What we also see here is that ***God is the source and the measure of all truth.***³

Think about this, what does light do, it illuminates the darkness showing your surrounding for what it really is...

- **Ex:** Ever walked around in the dark??
 - But then the light gets flipped on!

God is the source that illuminates what really is...

So God is ***perfection*** and ***illumination...***

- This is an incredibly good thing...
- He is to us what no one else can be...
- He shows us what truth is and shows us what it looks like to walk in it...
- His truth is good for us because it keeps us from danger...

I think we miss this alot. We thing the truth of God= rules and kill-joy... His truth is what shows us true joy!

- I feel like the God that made us has a good pulse on how we should live...

So God is light...

Verse 6:

⁶ If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth.

Saying one thing and then living another way...

Jesus addresses this...

³ John Piper, *Let us Walk in the Light of God.*

Textual evidence:

Luke 6:46: Why do you call me Lord and do not do what I say

Luke 9:23: if anyone wants to follow after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Matthew 7:21-23: Not everyone who says Lord Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father.

Illustration: You say that you're an ATL Hawks fan...

- You from ATL? *No*
- You have any cool Jersey's? *No*
- You know any of the players? *No*
- You ever been to a game? *NO*
 - But I watch on TV, Matt Ryan was my favorite player!
 - They got some big guys that hit hard...
 - *Uhhhhhhh...*
- You know that you have the wrong sport right?!? *What do you mean??*
- ***Bro, you're not an ATL Hawks fan...***

The same is true for a lot of people that claim Christianity...

- Live counter to the things of Jesus... *Church going people...*

Here's the thing I need you to see... Walking in darkness means your life is shaped by the Word than God's Word...

When we walk in darkness, we're controlled by our desires... Our natural desires lead us in Darkness because we don't have the light...

⁴Illustration: Piper's example of walking in darkness...

- Feels a cold sharp edge and the warmth of soft fur...
- Goes to furry warmth...
- Light comes on and it's a man-eating beast...
- The cold sharp edge is the sword of Jesus ready to defend...

This is the reality of those that are walking in darkness...

You can't have fellowship with the light and not emit any light...

- This is more than being a good person...
- Emissions of light that come from God have to deal with surrender and Lordship...

Verse 7:

⁷ If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

*The light of Jesus doesn't just **clear our vision**, it **regulates our conduct**.*

Walk implies actions and activities...

Illustration: Flashlight walking in the woods example for walking in the light...

- *Flesh out...*

So are we perfect and never sin after we trust in Jesus?!?

Verse 8:

⁸ If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

The goal isn't perfection, it's continual progress...

- **Example:** getting across this room...

The goal is not perfection but progress forward in the things of Jesus...

Here's what the light does... It exposes our sin, and it's not comfortable...

⁴ Credit goes to John Piper for this illustration/application, *Let us Walk in Light*.

Illustration: Turning up the air before bed and flipping the light on...

This is what the light does, and as we see the sin, we choose not to walk in the sin but to walk in the ways of Christ...

How do we do that??

This leads us to **Verse 9:**

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Call of a Christian is a life of confession... Don't confess your sin. Not a Christian...

GOSPEL

- *Righteous... Just...*
- *Forgiveness...*

Verse 10:

¹⁰ If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Didn't you just say that?!?

John drives home the point he made in **verse 8** about sin... But this time, he makes an even stronger appeal, saying that to claim to be without sin is to call God a liar...

Here's the reality:

Everyone has sin. The question is will you keep waking in it, or will you confess it?!?

John Piper: *The goal is not sinlessness, it's sin consciousness...*

Sin consciousness leads to confession and faith in the finished work of Jesus...

Conclusion [VAMP]

Appeal for Salvation

Baptism... Is a picture of how you have received the light...

TEXT BAPTISM to the # on Screen...

Appeal to those who are saved... What are the dark areas of your life that you need to expose to the light??

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This isn't something that you just do to start the Christian life, it's the way that you continue in the Christian life...

This is how you expose the dark areas to the light...

Where do you need to do that this morning...