

Learning to Share
1 John 1:1 – 10
July 31, 2014

Main Idea: Christians enjoy fellowship with God, who is perfectly holy, and with one another in truth and love.

Introduction

As we began our series on First John, we will find that this book is all about love and holiness. John has always had a fascination with dealing with love and truth. We must have love, or we are not truly believers in Jesus. But we must also not ignore the truth before us. The key is to follow the truth but to do it in love. I love John and his writings because first of all, his Greek is easy to translate and I enjoyed that when I was in college. But second, and much more important, is that John writes in a simple way except his writings are very deep.

John's writings are challenging to all of us because there are easy to understand and yet hard to apply to our lives and accomplish. Often John will take two items and tell us we must do both. The hard part is that the two items generally conflict with what we thought we were supposed to do. For instance, John will tell us in this book that we must love one another and also tells us to follow God's commands. One sounds like judgment and the other sounds like love. But they are tied together for God sees us loving him when we are following his commands. Our obedience to God is a form of love to him.

So let's dive in to the first epistle written generally to the church at Ephesus, of which John was an elder, and also passed around Asia Minor, which is now Turkey. We will begin with talking about the heart of Christian sharing together which is fellowship. We will discover that we have fellowship with God the Father and God the Son and with one another. This fellowship is forged by holiness and maintained by the Holy Spirit.

1 John 1:1–10

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2** the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And we are writing these things so that

our joy may be complete. **5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

I. Christians enjoy fellowship because of Jesus' sacrifice (vv. 1 – 4).

A We have a real relationship with Jesus.

- 1 One of the most pervasive groups that was attempting to infiltrate Christianity true false teachers in the church was a group called the Gnostics.
- 2 This group exerted a powerful force on the church from the Times of John at the end of the first century until about the fourth century A.D. Today, Gnostics are trying to make a real insurgents with the discovery of ancient manuscripts written by their teachers.
- 3 Works like the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Peter are all Gnostic in their origin. Any book that describes a secret knowledge of Jesus' teaching originates from the Gnostics.
- 4 The Gnostics claimed to have a secret knowledge of Jesus and his teachings. They claimed that there was more to Jesus teachings spiritually than most Christians would.
- 5 They also claimed that Jesus did not actually have a physical body while here on earth. They claimed he was more like a hologram or a projection. Thus, they did not believe he physically died on the cross. This orientation toward the spiritual side being more important than the physical side left them with a philosophy that sins done in the body were not as important as spiritual sins.
- 6 Enter the first letter of John. John starts this out combating the idea that Jesus was not a physical being on earth. As one of the witnesses who follow Jesus the entire time of his physical ministry, John had insight into whether Jesus was physically present or not.

- 7 So he begins his first epistle claiming the physicality of Jesus. The first sentence of the letter is taken up with references to Jesus as a physical being. He says about Jesus that he and the other disciples heard Jesus, saw him with their own eyes, and touched his body with their own hands.
- 8 Jesus was physically there and had a real relationship with the disciples. Not only this, but Jesus is with us today by the power of his Holy Spirit. We have a real relationship with him because of his sacrifice on the cross, which granted us eternal life.
- 9 John calls Jesus two things: the word of life and eternal life. Jesus is the word of life because every word that he speaks his life to our souls. As Peter once said, Jesus alone holds the words of life. But beyond being life for our souls and for us today, Jesus brings eternal life. This life to come is what gives us hope for our destiny.

B We have a real relationship with the Father.

- 1 Along with knowing Jesus personally as Christians, we also have a relationship with the Father. He arranged for Jesus to come to earth and teachers about him. He ordained our eternal life when he allowed his Son to die in our place on the cross.
- 2 Because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can have relationship with God. Previously, we did not know God personally like we do today. Jesus' sacrifice made this all possible.
- 3 Previously, we as sinners were at odds with God. Because of the sins that we committed against him, he had every right to sentence us to an abysmal eternity in Hell.
- 4 Instead, the father organize a way to bridge the gap between himself and us because of sin. Sin sin was the problem between us, Jesus would come and be sacrificed as the sinless human being that could reconcile God with humans.
- 5 Since Jesus was willing to sacrifice himself, he made the way across the gap to bridge sinful humans with a holy God. The engine of this relationship transformation was his innocent blood that was shed.
- 6 Back shed blood has the power to wash away sin. This changed our relationship with God the Father. Jesus stands in as our advocate and his sinless life and blood are washed over our sins so that God only sees his son when he looks at us.
- 7 This act of justification allows for God to welcome us into his family of sons and daughters. Now we can have relationship with him and fellowship with him.

- 8 That would fellowship is extremely important. It is a word in the original that speaks of having things in common or sharing similar things. In our case, we share righteousness with God because of Jesus. His Holy Spirit now dwells in our hearts.
- 9 **Application:** We are not able to have a real relationship with God through prayer and communicate. All of this happened because Jesus was willing to sacrifice himself. We have been set free from sin and into a relationship with our Creator.

II. Christians walk after God in light (vv. 5 – 7).

A God is totally righteous.

- 1 There is a history in the Old Testament of this light and darkness motif. All throughout it, light always stands for righteousness and truth while darkness always stands for wickedness and evil.
- 2 The prophets and the Psalms as well as some wisdom literature use this motif of light and darkness. It is moralized into right and wrong decisions. Throughout these books, but it is always good and darkness is always bad.
- 3 In the New Testament, Paul will make a point in Ephesians 3 of using light and darkness in the same ways. He calls Christians children of light and makes the metaphor complete by speaking of those who do evil in the night.
- 4 This motif used everywhere in the Bible is used also the New Testament writers like Paul and John. This does not mean that when light is referred to it can't be liberal, but it is usually metaphorical.
- 5 John makes the claim that God is light and there is no darkness in him at all. The combination of Greek negatives stacked on one another makes it clear that this is never possible. God can never exhibit any darkness whatsoever.
- 6 God is light in two ways. First, he is physically light. In Revelation 21 – 22, the city of the New Jerusalem is completely transparent so that God's light can shine through. There are several places in the Bible where God is referred to as light. He literally and physically is described as light.
- 7 He is also light in a metaphorical sense. In the sense of light equals righteousness, God is light. God is completely righteous. It is one of his attributes and how we can become righteous. He gives us his righteousness and clothes us with it when we follow Jesus become saved.
- 8 When John says God is light, he is especially referring to his moral righteousness. Not only is God light, completely righteous, but there is no darkness in him. Not at all. He is not evil or God could ever be able and he cannot operate through evil means.

B His people must be totally righteous.

- 1 Just as God is completely righteous, we who are believers in Jesus must walk in that same righteousness. Righteousness maintains our fellowship with one another and with God as well as maintains our reputation as his witnesses and representatives.
- 2 John will present several conditional sentences will help us understand how important our relationship with God is and how much regular sending a fax that connection between God and his people.
- 3 The word “walk” is an important word that speaks metaphorically to our lifestyle. When John uses the walk in these sentences, he is not referred to a one-time sin. He is referring to a regular practice of sinning.
- 4 The first conditional sentence depicts a believers who professes to walk with God, to live a righteous life and have a fellowship with God, but simultaneously and regularly sins against God.
- 5 This “Christian” may say whatever they wish about the relationship with God, but according to John, they are simply lying to themselves and are not speaking or accomplishing the truth.
- 6 This is a dangerous situation to be in because you are one step away from getting a callused heart against God while lying about the danger of your situation.
- 7 **Illustration:** I have a close friend who does this sort of thing. He maintains that he has a vibrant relationship with Jesus and yet I feel like our fellowship is broken. The way that we are when we hang out now is different than it used to be. I feel that there is a sense of a gap between us, something separating us from true fellowship and honesty. This is what it feels like when sin separates relationships. Sin separates our relationship with God in our relationship with other Christians. Only being truthful about this danger and dealing with it head on will we be able to save that fellowship we have lost.
- 8 In verse 7, John now adds the reality of the possibility. If we lie about her situation, that fellowship is lost. But if we tell the truth and truly live a holy lifestyle, that kinship, that camaraderie, is there amongst believers.
- 9 The threat of any sin that would destroy our relationship is unknowable by the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. This word for cleanse is used in speaking of Temple cleansing and ritual cleansing. But here he refers to the removal of all sin. It is not just ritual; it cleans everything.
- 10 **Illustration:** Jesus is like our Mr. Clean eraser. Mr. clean claims to have a product that will completely erase any blemish. But this product is only concerned with what is on the surface. I have never tried it so I don't know

if it works. But the claim is that it will clean any random stain you have in your house. Jesus' blood is greater than this eraser. He totally frees us from sin by wiping it out and washing it away. The only thing that is left is his righteousness in us.

- 11 **Application:** Jesus' blood provides a way for us to remain in relationship even when we stumble over sin. The difference here is that our sin is momentary and we immediately repent from doing it. It is a bump in the road that we stumble over. But walking in sin is living a lifestyle of sin against God. This is what separates us from him and relationship and from one another.

III. Christians tell the truth about sin (vv. 8 – 10).

A We occasionally struggle with sin.

- 1 John then presents a second possibility that would damage our fellowship with one another. In this possibility, the "Christian" claims to have no sin. This is almost the same as the person walking in sin and saying his relationship is fine.
- 2 The difference here is that it's not just a lie but the deception is already taken hold. This person believes that they do not sin. Sin is a real thing and it is what kept us from our relationship with God in the past.
- 3 To say that you don't have any sin is to suggest that you never stumble. But we all stumble in many ways. Sin is a constant reality even for believers. We can live a holy life but sin is all around us.
- 4 This person is not sending in saying he's not. He's basically saying that anything he does is not sin. But this is also dangerous because God has told us certain things we do our sinful.
- 5 If we do not manage our weaknesses they will overtake us. It is a better stance to be prepared for Temptation than it is to say we will not sin. Our protection is indeed prepared for an attack from the enemy that would make us vulnerable and ruin our fellowship with others and God.
- 6 This person has not lost a fellowship yet. But they are dangerously close to the edge. Believing that what we do is not sin when it might be put us in a dangerous place of not even avoiding temptation. This is similar to the practice of the Gnostics.
- 7 We must be careful to avoid temptation and evaluate our lives and lifestyles, our behaviors and our actions, so that we do not become endangered of breaking the fellowship we enjoy with one another and with God.

- 8 As John will fully expel when we continue to read his letter, righteousness is part of obeying God's commands. And through this obedience we shall God that we love him.
- 9 **Application:** Let us not get close to the edge. Let us evaluate our lives and asked the Holy Spirit if anything displeases her grieves his heart. To be watching sin and keeping it at bay will keep us from losing that connection. We must come to place where we think about what our sin does to God's heart. If we realized how much we grieve him and heard him, perhaps our love for him might be stronger than our love for momentary pleasures of sin.

B Jesus stands to cleanse us from sin.

- 1 A third option for dealing with sin in the community of faith so that we do not lose fellowship is to count on Jesus to stand in our place and take care of the sin for us.
- 2 The best way to deal with sin is not to continually do it but like yourself and say that you still have that fellowship. The best way to deal with sin is not to say that you don't sin and ignore your lifestyle and its dangerous effects.
- 3 The best way to deal sin is to confess it to Jesus and allow him to cover it with his blood and wash it away. Jesus represents us before the father and all the father seeks is righteousness.
- 4 The imagery here that John uses is that of the legal trial and court system. The imagery here as of Jesus being our advocate, our attorney, who takes the stand on our behalf.
- 5 Jesus bears two names in verse 9 that help to defend us in court. He is called the just one and the faithful one. Because he bears these characteristics and is faithful when we are unfaithful and just when we are unjust, he puts his name and character on the line for us.
- 6 When Jesus is our advocate, two things happen. First he forgives us of our sin. This forgiveness reconciles our relationship with God and with others. Next, he cleanses us from that sin. This is the same word used earlier for cleansing.
- 7 This means that his blood does the work of removing the sin from our souls. After his cleansing and forgiveness, we stand righteous before God just as Jesus does.
- 8 The final example is of someone who says that they have never sin. This is a basic claim to a sinless life. But this is impossible because only Jesus had a sinless life.

- 9 To say this is to trample upon his sinless life and sacrifice for us. It is a very egregious sin to suggest that we don't even need the Savior to come and sacrifice himself in our place.
- 10 **Application:** Why would Jesus have to come and teach us to be like God, and offer himself as a sinless sacrifice if we have never sinned? The **fact** that he came and is our sacrifice shows that we have sin. If we don't think we need a Savior then we sacrifice our greatest freedom in Christ for a lie. Let us never suggest that we are God, that we are sinless. Let us always enjoy the freedom we have in Christ and the fellowship we share because of his sacrifice.

Conclusion

We have seen how important a gift God has given us in Christian fellowship. This ability to have things in common with one another, to share life to gather, to share each other's joys and each other's pains, to be able to confess sin, live together in peace, counsel one another and temptation, and build relationships that last for eternity, we need this fellowship. It may be the most precious gift that God ever gave to us once we became saved. Let us not trample on this precious gift by allowing sin to live in the holdout. Don't let sin even have a chance to destroy your relationships with God and other Christians. Don't let sin interfere with your life and your walk with God. If you see sin in your life, confess it and let Jesus take it so that you can live that righteous life that makes him want to be in fellowship with you.