

# **The Epistle of First John**

## **Lesson Four**

### **A Joyful Life (1 John 1:5-10)**

#### **Introduction:**

- I. In the prologue (1 Jn 1:1-4) John identified the first of four reasons for writing this letter.
  - A. "A Joyful Life" (1:4).
    1. Understanding the nature and character of Jesus Christ (1:1-3) would produce full and complete joy.
      - a. Joy in this context is full and complete satisfaction.
    2. Jesus spoke of this same joy to His disciples (Jn 15:11; 16:22-24).
      - a. The disciples would have fullness of joy at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
      - b. We have fullness of joy through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 15:13; 1 Pet 1:6-9; 4:12-14).
    3. We have fullness and completeness of joy – a sense of fullness and complete satisfaction – through faith in Jesus Christ because we have fellowship with God the Father through His Son (1 Jn 1:3-4).
- II. What is fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son?
  - A. First, we must define the word "fellowship."
    1. Fellowship (Greek: koinonia) is used three ways in the New Testament:
      - a. Agreement or communion – meaning complete accord, a common union, or agreement between all parties that results in oneness in achieving a common goal or purpose. The antithesis (opposite) of fellowship is disagreement and discord (2 Cor 6:14-16).
      - b. Joint-participation or sharing – meaning to share an experience together, or to share in the same kind of experience as another (Phil 3:8-11).

- c. Contribution and aid – meaning sharing of material things in common, aid or assistance given by one party to another to bring about equality (where no one is lacking), or to further a common goal or objective (2 Cor 8:1-5; Phil 1:3-5; 4:15-16).
- 2. John wanted us to have the same fellowship with him and others that they had with the Father through the Son (1 Jn 1:3, 6-7).
  - a. That fellowship was: complete accord, a common union, or agreement between all parties that results in sense of oneness and purpose (Phil 2:1-2).
  - b. Fellowship was being like-minded – of one accord, or one mind.
- B. In this letter, John reveals two important aspects of the nature and character of God.
  - 1. Fellowship with God is impossible unless we understand and incorporate these two divine attributes in our own lives – namely, that:
    - a. God is light (1 Jn 1:5).
    - b. God is love (1 Jn 4:8, 16).
  - 2. Unless we understand and integrate these attributes into our lives we can never achieve what John desired: a joyful life, a clean life, a discerning life, or a confident life.
    - a. Unless we "walk in the light as He is in the light" we will never have fulness of joy, nor live a clean life free from the power of sin, nor be able to discern between truth and error or good and evil.
    - b. And unless as "love one another" we don't know God.
      - (1). "He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."
      - (2). Unless we abide in Him, we cannot live a confident life – confident of eternal life in heaven.

**Discussion:**

- I. How is fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son possible?
  - A. We must understand God is light (1 Jn 1:5).

1. The Bible often contrasts "light" (goodness and righteousness) with "darkness" (evil and unrighteousness) (Eph 5:8-11).
    - a. Jesus described Himself as "light" or the one who brought "light into the world" (Jn 3:16-17; 8:12; 9:5).
    - b. John called Jesus "the Light" (Jn 1:6-9).
  2. John said, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5).
    - a. God is the personification of "light" – the personification of goodness, purity, holiness, righteousness, etc.
    - b. There is nothing in God's character or nature associated with "darkness" – sin, wickedness, unholiness, unrighteousness, etc.
  3. If we desire fellowship with God the Father, we must also be of "one accord" and of "one mind" – or in complete agreement – with that nature and character of God.
- B. To help us understand what fellowship with God **is not** John offers a scenario (1 Jn 1:6, 8).
1. "Walk" is a figure of speech referring to one's life as a whole – one's lifestyle.
    - a. Used in the OT to describe a person's conduct while on earth, especially concerning the choices they make concerning right and wrong (Ps 1:1).
  2. No one can have fellowship or oneness with God while walking in darkness (sin and unrighteousness).
    - a. If we claim fellowship with God while walking in darkness, " we lie and do not practice the truth... we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
- C. To understand what fellowship with God **is**, John offers a second scenario (1 Jn 1:7).
1. Again, "walk" refers to a life where one consistently makes the right choices to live as God would have them live (Ps 119:2-3).
    - a. Walking in the light describes one who keeps His testimonies, who seeks Him with all their heart, who deliberately chooses to avoid committing sin.
- II. How can we "walk in the light as God is in the light" when we are sinners?
- A. We battle spiritual darkness and the influence of the world.

1. We are sinners (Rom 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8, 1).
  2. How can we "walk in the light" knowing we have sinned in the past and continue to fall short of God's glory?
    - a. We must find some way of being forgiven and cleansed from those sins (Isa 59:1-2).
  3. We must take the first step to be cleansed from sin – confess our sins (1 Jn 1:9).
- B. What does it mean to "confess our sins?"
1. Some think it means to tell others that they have sinned – publicly "announce" they have committed some wrong.
    - a. Confession involves much more.
  2. "Confess" means "to profess, affirm, admit, or agree with" – meaning we profess, affirm, admit, or agree with the fact that we have sinned and transgressed the will of God.
  3. But implied in "confession" of sin is repentance – a personal renunciation, rejection, abandonment, and turning away from sin followed by amending (changing) our ways (2 Ch 7:14; Jer 7:3).
    - a. God's forgiveness has always been dependent on His people humbling themselves, seeking Him, turning from their iniquity, and amending or changing their ways.
    - b. Confession of sins without turning from those sins and changing one's life is completely useless – it accomplishes nothing.
  4. This is how (1 Jn 1:7):
    - a. We walk in the light as He is in the light.
    - b. We have fellowship with one another – with God.
    - c. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins.
- C. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins when we confess and repent of those sins.
1. It is not an "automatic" or "continual cleansing" as Calvinist (and some brethren) teach.

- a. Cleansing does not occur without confession and repentance – it never has, and it never will.
  - b. In fact, the word "continual" does not appear anywhere in the scriptures in reference to being cleansed by the blood of Christ.
2. The blood of Jesus Christ is always available to cleanse us from all sins (Heb 7:25).

**The Summary:**

- I. The first reason John had in writing this letter was so we could live a joyful life (1 Jn 1:4).
  - A. A joyful life comes by being in fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son.
    1. Fellowship with God involves of being of "one accord" and of "one mind" – or being in complete agreement – with the nature and character of God.
    2. However, the only way we can have fellowship with God is to walk in the light as He is in the light.
      - a. That involves living a life that knows God's will and does God's will.
    3. We not only have fellowship with God (vertical fellowship), but we also have fellowship with other faithful Christians (horizontal fellowship) – which is what John wanted (1 Jn 1:3).
    4. When we walk in the light as God is in the light, we know the blood of Jesus Christ is available to cleanse us from every sin.
  - B. We can never claim sinless perfection – we can never say we have no sin or say we do not sin.
    1. When we sin, we can be cleansed from all unrighteousness when we confess those sins out of a repentant heart – a changed heart leading to a changed life.
    2. Because of this, John's desire that we live a joyful life becomes attainable (1 Jn 1:5-10).

**Review Questions:**

1. According to John, how can we have full and complete joy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the three ways "fellowship" is used in the NT?
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3. What does it mean to say, "God is light?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What does the word "walk" mean in 1 John 1?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Explain the difference between walking in darkness versus walking in the light.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What must we, as sinners, do to walk in the light as God is in the light?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What is involved when we "confess our sins?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Does the blood of Christ "continually" or "automatically" cleanse us from all sin? Explain your answer.