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**A0419 – May 9, 2004 – 1 John 1:5-6 -- Walking in the Light**

Last week, we looked at the prologue to John’s first epistle. The first four verses are entitled, “The Call to Fellowship”. This week, we are going to look at the “Grounds of Fellowship” and “Walking in the Light.” But, first let’s review.

**I. PROLOGUE: THE CALL TO FELLOWSHIP (1:1-4)**

**A. SUBJECT: MESSAGE OF LIFE (1:1)**

*That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard (akouo; Perfect), that which we have seen (orao; Perfect) with our eyes (ophthalmos), that which we ourselves contemplated (theaomai; Aorist) and our hands had touched (pselaphao; Aorist) concerning the word of life—*

In verse 1, John tips us off to the **subject** under discussion. The Greek writers did this by the use of the Greek preposition *peri*, “concerning”. Concerning what? Concerning the “word of Life”. John’s subject is the word of Life. We said that “word” should not be capitalized because it confuses what John is trying to say. “Word” is not Jesus Christ. It should be translated “message”. John’s subject is the “message of Life”.

**B. THEME: ETERNAL LIFE (1:2)**

*and the life was made manifest (phaneroo; Aorist), and we have seen (orao; Perfect) and testify (martureo; Present) and report (apaggello; Present) to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest (phaneroo; Aorist) to us—*

Notice that verse 2 amplifies “Life” telling us more about this “Life”. This is “eternal life”, a quality of life that was with the Father and was made manifest to the apostles. Eternal life therefore is the **theme**. John is acting as an eyewitness reporter. He is giving us front-page news about eternal life. As we said last week, eternal life can be manifested two ways; *historically* in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and *presently* in the lives of believers (1 John 5:13). The subject under discussion then is not

Jesus Christ *per se*, but something we share with Jesus Christ; and what we share with Jesus Christ is eternal life. The Revisionists, a group of Jews (probably) who departed from John and the other apostles in Jerusalem, were telling John's readers that they did not have eternal life but John is warning them against this false teaching.

### C. PURPOSE # 1: FELLOWSHIP (1:3)

*that which we have seen (orao; Perfect) and heard (akouo; Perfect), we report (apaggello; Present) to you, so that you also may have fellowship (koinonia) with us (and our fellowship (koinonia) is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ)*

Verse 3 gives us John's **First Purpose**: Fellowship. And we said that John repeats two of the four words from verse 1 (*seeing* and *hearing*). The only ones John repeats are the two verbs that are in the Perfect tense. Perfect tense means an action that took place in the past and is having ongoing results. Only the *seeing* and *hearing* were having ongoing results because only *seeing* and *hearing* this eternal life are necessary for true fellowship with the apostles and the Father and Son. You may think it is impossible to see and hear what the apostles saw and heard since you live 2000 years later, but John thinks that it is possible. John is reporting that because we have believed, we share "eternal life" with Christ and being assured of this truth is the foundation for fellowship. The word fellowship is *koinonia* and means "sharing". It does not mean relationship, John is writing to people who already have a relationship, what he is writing about is fellowship.

### *RELATIONSHIP vs. FELLOWSHIP*

There is relationship and fellowship in all families, whether human or divine in origin. When you were born, you were born into a family, biologically speaking. There is a relationship that cannot be changed, it is permanent. Now, whether you get along with your parents or not, it doesn't change your relationship with them. What does change is your fellowship with them. You are either on good terms or bad terms. You are either getting along or not getting along. The human family is analogous to the divine family. When you became a believer, spiritually you were put into a relationship with God. That cannot change. You cannot lose your salvation. You didn't save yourself and therefore you can't unsave yourself. We got ourselves into this mess but it takes someone outside the mess to get us out of it. It takes Jesus Christ, the God-man to get us out of this mess. So, your position can't change; what does change is fellowship with God. Fellowship is temporal. When you sin, in terms of the General Will of God or the Specific Will of God, you get out of fellowship. You are on bad terms with God; and when you get on bad

terms, there is discipline just like in a human family (one that is functioning). John is wanting believers to remain in fellowship with God.

### *APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY*

Remember that John also wanted us to stay in fellowship with the Apostles and he even put that on the same level as being in fellowship with God. How is that possible? Apostolic authority. When John spoke, it was as if God were speaking. There is no authority that sits above God's authority. But I'm warning you; if you drop *this* concept of authority in a conversation with a modern man, you will be perceived as absolutely offensive. The authority that God's word claims is extremely offensive to the modern mind. To tell the modern man that God's word does not have to bow to human reason is an insult in our modern society. I'm not saying to throw human reason out, no, I'm not saying that. What I am saying is that faith precedes reason intellectually. The mind must first be made right with God before it is able to reason properly. And you can say "NO, I will not bow to the authority of Scripture!" But I assure you, to do so is to slay reason on the Altar of Chance. It is either God or Chance. There are no middle roads. There are many, many inconsistent thinkers who like to build middle roads but very few consistent thinkers, that is, one who follows his presuppositions to their logical conclusions. The reason is because they can't live that way. Those who do, suffer the consequences and finally despair of knowledge. We live in a cause-effect universe that God created. This is a personal universe, not an impersonal, Chance-driven sea of goo. And the word of God is an absolute authority whether men like it or not. It is true truth. It is a gift because it reveals to us the proper orientation of the human mind to the Creator of the human mind. It is the necessary presupposition of making sense of all reality. You, as a believer here today can understand the universe because the Creator outside of the universe has revealed to us how it works, how it is orchestrated and governed. You therefore stand in a fantastic position as a believer. Now your mind can partake of true wisdom and insight and it is all by the grace of God. That is why I am calling you to receive the apostolic authority of John's writings today, because I want you to be in fellowship with God. I want you to have this wisdom and insight. John says in his gospel, 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life," God's word says if you believe you have eternal life." Don't doubt that today, doubting that gets you out of fellowship with God because you share eternal life with Jesus Christ. The Revisionists were telling John's readers that they didn't have eternal life, they came as human authorities. John came by Divine authority. Who are you going to believe, mere human opinions or Divine facts?

## D. PURPOSE # 2: APOSTLE'S JOY

*and these we write (grapho), so that our joy may be full.*

Finally, we came to v. 4, the **Second Purpose**: Apostolic Joy. When believers are nurtured by the truth with the result that they walk in the truth, this brings John great joy. We found in 3 John 4 that nothing brings John more joy than seeing his children walking in the truth. Most churches dilute doctrinal differences; but John emphasized doctrine because it brings true joy, it brings true unity. When the world has given up everything for unity, what will they stand up for? The only thing left is unity at that point. Unity for the sake of unity? You are kidding, right? Peace at all costs? You will go bankrupt. True joy, true unity, true peace is found in true doctrine, true content, within the word of God. John emphasizes that. He wants true fellowship according to true doctrine because it brings true joy.

## II. PREAMBLE: LIVING IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1:5-2:11)

### A. STAYING ON THE PATH: WALKING IN GOD'S LIGHT (1:5-2:2)

#### 1. THE GROUND OF FELLOWSHIP: GOD IS LIGHT

*5 And this is the message (angelo) which we have heard (akouo; Perfect) from Him and we report (anangelo) to you, that God is light (photos) and in Him is no darkness (skotia), not even a bit (oudemia; strong emphatic).*

Here is the message that John and the apostles heard from Jesus Christ. Notice the word "message". It comes from the Greek word *angelo* which is obviously the word from which we get the word "angel". Angels are messengers. Here John is giving us the message that the apostles heard from Christ. God is light. The word for light is *photos*, from which we get the word photon, a tiny package of light, it means "light" (cf. photosynthesis, photograph). This reveals two things about God.

#### *LIGHT: GOD'S CHARACTER IS PURE*

*First*, God's character is pure. We know that God is SRJLOOOIE. When John says God is light, He is emphasizing God's attributes of righteousness and justice which together make up God's holiness. What do we mean when we say God is righteous? We mean that **God's moral character is the standard for right and wrong everywhere in the**

**universe**. We live in a world that denies any ultimate standard. Law has become transient and provincial. *Transient* means the law can be changed over time as needs arise. *Provincial* means law is limited to boundaries (e.g., as Americans we follow American law, not Korean law). It is claimed there are no absolute laws. Historically there are only three sources of law:

1) FROM GOD DIRECTLY. Divine Law (Theocracy). God gives the law. This is what Old Testament Israel experienced after God gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In Old Testament Israel, there were only two branches of government; the Executive Branch and the Judicial Branch. Israel had no Legislative Branch. This is because God served as the Legislator of the Law. God gave the Law. Judges made courtroom judgments and the executive branch executed the law.

2) FROM GOD INDIRECTLY. Human Law based on Divine Law. This would correspond to United States Law. The early law text books have thousands and thousands of quotations from Scripture. They clearly based law on Divine Law. However, we have three branches of government; Legislative, Judicial, and Executive. This was originally set up to be a system of checks and balances. One branch of government checks the other branches. This system of checks and balances was implemented because the founding fathers recognized the depravity of man. The problem with this system today is essentially in the Judicial Branch. Why? Because the judicial branch subverts the law by re-interpreting the law. Law has to be interpreted outside of its historical context. This is where our postmodern culture is coming in and destroying language and meaning. Postmodernism is the philosophy that language is a social construct and can be used to manipulate others so as to position yourself in the place of power. So, postmodernism does two basic things. First, it says life is a power struggle. And second, it says that the way to power is through language being used to manipulate people (e.g., Bill Clinton).

3) FROM MAN. Human Law based on Human Reason (Humanism). What is Humanism? Humanism is the view that man is the measure of all things. Man is deified. Man becomes God. It emphasizes *reason* over *revelation* and so there is no absolute standard of values. Everything is relative. But if everything is relative, then the statement “everything is relative” must itself be relative. See, every system of thought that proposes no absolutes has to make an absolute statement in order to state its case. Another example is the phrase, “everything is evolving”. But, if “everything is evolving,” then the statement “everything is evolving” must also be evolving and what we are left with then is a meaningless statement. Humanism is basically built on evolutionary thought which proposes that man is a product of his environment and, therefore, is not accountable to

any ultimate Person. Man is just a victim of his circumstances. So, Humanism has a very high view of man but a very low view of life. According to Humanism the key to living a good life is defined by Maslov's "self-realization" and "gratification" scheme. What are the goals of Humanism? There are four goals:

- 1) to change the economic system and redistribute wealth,
- 2) to establish a new one world religion (very ecumenical),
- 3) to establish a New World Order, and
- 4) to breed a new race of people.

So, what we are saying when we say God is righteous is that **God's moral character is the standard for right and wrong everywhere in the universe.** But what do we mean when we say God is just? We mean that **God never compromises His standards anywhere in the universe.** Human judicial systems fail and compromise because the men running them are sinners (e.g., they compromise for their friends, they lie, they cheat for financial gain). Humans, because they are sinful, compromise justice. People who are guilty get off the hook and people who are innocent get convicted. Allah, the god of Islam, also compromises justice. He lets people into heaven on the basis of good works outweighing bad works. But what about those bad works? Allah never deals with them. He just overlooks them. He sweeps them under the carpet. He compromises. This is what man does. This means that Allah is a god made in the image of man. He is a man-made god. But the God of Scripture never compromises His standards anywhere for anyone in the entire universe. His character sets the standard and He never compromises. Where punishment is due, it is met every time. This is why God, of mere grace, sent His Son in human flesh to die for you, to take the judgment that we all deserved upon His one and only Son. God's wrath poured out on His own Son because the sin of the world could not be overlooked, it had to be dealt with. And if it wasn't, then God is not just to let anyone into heaven. **This is what we mean by God is light. He's righteous and just. He is the standard and He never compromises that standard because His character is immutable, it never changes.**

#### *LIGHT: GOD REVEALS HIMSELF*

The second thing about God being light has to do with the Doctrine of Revelation. Light is revelatory. You cannot see in the dark. You can only see in the light. God is a revealing God. How has He revealed Himself? He has revealed Himself in two ways. First, **Creation Revelation** and second, **Written Revelation.**

## Creation Revelation

Creation Revelation is knowledge of the existence and essence of God available to all men. It comes in two forms; 1) nature and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). First, God's creation of nature (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-20 READ). This is necessary so that no man is without excuse. Literally, all men are without an apologetic or courtroom defense before God. Second, God's creation of the human conscience. Conscience is *suneideisis* in the Greek and means "with perception" or "with knowledge" (con-science). Paul teaches us this in Rom. 2:14-16 (READ). The conscience is a witness bearer. It's like a tape that records everything. It is a never-ending tape recording of your thoughts. It is going to be played back to you at the judgment. And God is going to say, "See, right there, at that point in your life you knew me, you knew me clearly, and you rejected me." You cannot trick God, the time for smoke and mirrors is over. No one is going to pull a fast one on God, He's got your tape right there. See, as Christians we don't have to prove the existence of God. Unbelievers already know God exists. Of course, they deny this, but this denial doesn't mean they are telling the truth. Paul tells us that they suppress that knowledge. The word "suppress" (*katecho*) means "to detain". They detain that knowledge because they don't want to face it, so they detain it in their mentality. This is like quarantining something. You detain it so it can't be accessed. How do we do this? Well, there are many HVP schemes.

### *PSYCHOLOGICAL SCHEMES*

First, there are psychological schemes including: alcohol abuse, drug/substance abuse, and workaholics which are primarily escape mechanisms. They destroy or occupy the mind in order to suspend the knowledge temporarily.

### *PHILOSOPHICAL SCHEMES*

Second, there are more elaborate philosophical schemes. Do you realize that the erection of philosophical systems has expended more human energy than any other human activity? Men have come up with elaborate attempts to explain the universe as a place without God. We have the Greek Idealists, Stoics and Epicureans, we have the Pragmatism of Rome, the Barbarianism of the Visigoths, the Empiricism of Hume, the Rationalism of Kant, the Existentialism of Kierkegaard, the Dialectic of Hegel and Marx, the Evolutionism of Darwin, the Totalitarianism of Hitler, the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle, and now the Postmodernism of Michael Foucault as expressed in our so-called Democracy. Whether you know it or not, you probably embrace the thinking of

many of these men. Their philosophies have crept into your thinking at some point and you didn't even know it. That is what we call HVP and that is why we need the word of God to root out this HVP and replace it with DVP. That is why you have got to be in the Word, to protect yourself from these false ways of thinking. If you really want to worship the Lord, you will realize that foundational to worship is thinking God's thoughts. It is not raising your hands, it is not barking like a dog, it is not what typically passes for praise and worship. It is thinking God's thoughts after Him.

### *RELIGIOUS SCHEMES*

Finally, there are religious schemes; and mind you, Christianity is not a religion. A religion is what man does for God to gain divine approval. Christianity is what God has done for you through Christ. There are many religions in the world, supposed people sincerely searching for God; Buddhism, which says all is one and you have to come to that realization; Confucianism, the moral philosophy that claimed no knowledge of God; Islam which destroys personality and justice; and there are many others I could list. The word of God says that no one seeks God (Rom. 3:9b-11). They may be seeking "a god" but they aren't seeking "the God". There is a big difference. They are searching for a god after their own image, one that does not exist. But it is "the God" that comes searching for you. He is the one whose character and authority, how magnificently gracious as displayed so fully in His Son, offends the depraved man.

### Written Revelation

*Second*, after Creation Revelation we have Written Revelation. Written Revelation is God's verbal communication captured in history. Not all of God's communication was captured. John tells us in 21:25 that there were many other things that were said but not captured, but that which was captured is recorded and available to you in the Bible. The written word makes the words of God accessible to almost all peoples everywhere. God has gifted men to translate the words of God into many languages and the written form gives stability to the word of God such that it can pass from generation to generation and place to place. While Creation Revelation is enough to hold men accountable; Written Revelation is enough for men to be saved. It tells us about God, about creation, and about the barrier between sinful man and the God of Light since the Fall. It tells us about how the barrier was removed in Christ, your substitute, so that men everywhere need only believe in Jesus Christ and they will be saved. It says a lot about God that He is Light because it means that He is a revealing God, not a hiding God. He makes Himself known.



He makes Himself known in nature, in conscience and in the written word. Let's move on in v. 5.

John is fond of stating the other side of the truth and here he makes it overly plain, not only is God Light, but *in Him is no darkness*. This is typical of John's writing style. John then adds *at all* (NASB). This is the Greek word *oudemia* and is an extremely strong emphatic negative. What John is saying is *in Him is no darkness—not even a bit*. John is so strong that it may be inferred that the Revisionists taught that God was both light and darkness, both good and evil. If these Revisionists departed from the apostles in Jerusalem, then they may have been Jewish, and they may have leaned heavily on a verse like Isa. 45:7 which says, *The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these*. Thus, they may have said that God's nature was both light and darkness so moral distinctions were irrelevant. But Isaiah is speaking first of God's creation of light and dark and second of *creating calamity* upon sinners as a punishment and discipline for believers. John wants to make sure that his readers are not duped into believing that God is the source of both good and evil. If the Revisionists are right about God's character then moral imperatives are useless since God would be both good and evil. We could then live licentious lives. But John is saying, "NO, God is Light." Morally, His character is perfect and it is His character that forms the grounds for true fellowship.

## 2. HVP GIMMICK #1: HUMAN GOOD

**6** *If we (ean; 1<sup>st</sup> Conditional Clause) say that we have fellowship (koinonia) with Him but we walk (peripateo) in the darkness, we lie (pseudomai) and we do not do the truth (aleitheia):*

*REVIEW: RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP*

Before verse 6, let's review diagram 1 on your bulletin. Remember, this epistle is written to believers, not to unbelievers or even a mixed group. It is written to those who have been forgiven (2:12) and are of God (4:4). These people therefore share eternal life with Christ (1 John 5:13). Thus, they are in union with the Light. That is their position. John is not calling them to salvation, they already have that. Being in union with the light is permanent, that is why that top circle is solid. However, there is also Communion or Fellowship which is signified by the bottom circle. The bottom circle has to do with walking in the Light, walking in the same moral and spiritual sphere as God is always in. That circle is a dotted line because it's not permanent. If you have believed in Christ, you have Union (top circle). That is a done deal (eternal security). The issue now is your day-

to-day walk which is consistent with the light or inconsistent with the light. If you are walking in the light, then you are walking as the spiritual Christian. If you are not walking in the light, then you are walking in darkness or what the Bible calls Carnality. You are a carnal Christian and cannot be distinguished from a non-Christian. The word “carnal” simply means fleshly or worldly. You are not walking consistent with who you are in Christ.

Verse 6 begins with the first of five conditional clauses (1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10). This means that this is up to your volition. If you say X, then Y. And verse 6 is HVP Gimmick #1: Human Good. Given the grounds for true fellowship, namely living in conformity with the moral perfection of God, the believer may claim to have fellowship with God but actually be walking in the darkness. If such a claim is made, then it is a lie. The *we* in v. 5 was the “apostles” and the *you* was the “readers.” But in v. 6, John shifts to the *inclusive* use of *we*. Thus, *we* here refers to the apostles and his readers. What this means is that the apostles did not claim to be exempt from making this claim. Even an apostle could say that they were in fellowship but actually be walking in the darkness. The word *walk* is *peripateo* and is made up of two words, *peri*, which means “around” like the word “perimeter” and the word *pateo* which means “to tread”. So, the word means to “to tread around”. One who claims to have fellowship but is treading around in the darkness is lying. The word for *lie* is *pseudomai* and we get the word “pseudo”. Things that are pseudo are false. This is the first attempt for the believer to dupe other people into thinking he is really spiritual.

### *EXCURSUS ON HUMAN GOOD*

Mature believers are great at this because they have the great temptation to rely on *human good* and claim that it is *divine good*. Remember, we have a sin nature, and every believer has areas of strengths and weaknesses. See diagram 2 on your handout in the bulletin. Believers often pump out human good in the name of God but actually it is done from false motives. And it is the motive behind the act that determines whether it is human or divine good. It is your areas of strength that you tend to rely on human good. Never forget that human good comes from the sin nature just like personal sin. If you are a mature believer your struggle will be determining when you are operating under the filling of the Holy Spirit and producing Divine good vs. when you are operating under an area of strength and merely producing human good. Both human good and personal sin are rejected by God. Both get you out of fellowship so that both indicate you are walking in the darkness. Since God is Light, to walk in the darkness is to walk in a moral and spiritual sphere where God is absent. The NASB says that one who does this *does not*

*practice the truth*, but the verb *practice* is over-translated. What it really means is that he does *not do the truth* (*poieo*). So, the believer that is walking in darkness, in carnality, is not living consistent with the truth. HVP Gimmick #2 and #3 will be dealt with next week in v. 8 and 10. v. 7 describes the consistent Christian, the spiritual Christian who is walking in the light.

### 3. DVP NORM: SPIRITUALITY

**7** *But if* (*ean*; Conditional Clause) *we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another* (*alleilon*; Reciprocal Pronoun) *and the blood* (*haima*) *of His Son Jesus cleanses* (*katharizo*) *us from each sin* (*hamartia*).

Here is the second conditional clause indicated by the *ean*. Again, this means it is up to your volition. Notice that v. 5 said **God is light** but John says here that **God is in the light**. Both are true. God's character is morally perfect *and* God is continually in that sphere. If you walk in the moral and spiritual sphere that is compatible with God's character, then you are walking in the same sphere as God, you are walking in the light. The result is true fellowship with **one another**. The phrase, **one another**, is a *reciprocal pronoun* meaning "He is having fellowship with you and you with him." The fellowship is mutual, not just one way. **One another** does not refer to you and other believers here, but the believer and God; because it is He who is in the light. To have fellowship with another believer, you both have to be walking in the same moral and spiritual sphere, you both have to be walking in the light. Then you can have fellowship with another believer, but here the concern is about being in fellowship with God.

#### PROBLEM OF UNKNOWN SIN

This final phrase is the answer to unknown sin. What if I commit an unknown sin? Does that mean I am walking in the darkness and I don't even know about it and, therefore, I am a liar? John's answer is "no." Why not? Well, this involves us in the known and unknown commands of God for this dispensation. Let's face it, we are all in different places in the Christian life. Some of us are new or immature believers, others are mature and others are somewhere in-between. That is what is different about us and that is an indication of how personal God really is. He deals with each one of us individually. But we all have the same commands to follow. That never changes. Diagram 3 is meant to show you two examples, an immature believer on the left and the mature believer on the right. The immature believer knows few commands and has many unknown and the mature believer has many known and few unknown. That is what is being illustrated by

the numbers 1-9. The immature believer has a small sphere of responsibility because he only knows a few commands. His sphere is small. When he sins within that sphere, he knows it is wrong and he is walking in the darkness. But if he sins outside that sphere, meaning he didn't know it was a sin, it is still a sin, but it doesn't mean he is walking in the darkness. The grace of God is so great that as long as you are walking in accordance with what you know of God's Word, then ***the blood of His Son Jesus Christ cleanses you from each (unknown) sin.*** It doesn't cleanse you from known sin. How to be cleansed from known sin is what 1 John 1:9 is all about. But if you commit some unknown sin, then there is an ongoing cleansing taking place by the blood of Christ. I know it is also true that you are cleansed (1 Cor. 6:11), but here, John is talking about an ongoing cleansing that occurs as a part of the Father/child relationship. Notice that the Greek word for cleansing (*katharizo*) is in the present tense. There is no other way to understand the present tense here other than an ongoing cleansing. Since this is true, some may say, "Well, I guess it is best just to stay ignorant of the word of God and then I'll be continually cleansed." This won't work, because you are in God's family now. And just like there is discipline and growing up to do in your earthly family, so there is discipline and growing up in your heavenly family. There is growth and maturity after salvation, not stagnancy.

[Back To The Top](#)

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