

How To Have Fellowship **1 John 1:3-2:2**

In the following verses John continues to attack the false teaching of Docetism. This “son of thunder” will prove worthy of the name.

Have you noticed what John says in **verse 3**? Have you noted the difference he makes by using two different pronouns? For the third time John emphasizes the fact that Jesus was truly human and not some figment of one’s imagination. He was truly human in full sense of the word. In simple but profound terms, the Apostle says “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you....” The thought is, I and the other Apostles were there, you were not! We know! You do not! That is so plain even I can understand that.

I never cease to be amazed by people who think they know more about something they have never experienced than someone who has.

Here, we come to the first stated purpose for writing this letter.

THE PURPOSE verse 3-4

Chapter 1:3:b “that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the his Son Jesus Christ.” May I say something truly theological? Wow!!! Can you imagine lumps of clay being able to have fellowship with a Holy, sinless, Almighty God? How can this be?

Before briefly considering how that can be, maybe it would be a good idea to consider what fellowship is. In our present Church world when a body of believers meet for some dinner or function they say they are having fellowship even when there is no conversation about their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is not Biblical fellowship.

To have fellowship in the true sense of the word means we have things in common. It means we meet around Christ and share both the things and the life of Christ. We have Him as the center of our conversation and purpose for gathering. And, the amazing thing is, when we have fellowship with the Son we also have fellowship with the Father. Later in the letter, John will deal with the impossibility of having relationship and fellowship with one member of the Godhead without having relationship and fellowship with the others.

But how can a sinful being have fellowship with a sinless Being? There is only one way. God the Father made this possible by giving His only begotten Son to

not only die for the sinner but to die as the sinner. In the Gospel according to John we find God in Christ and in this epistle by the same John we find God in us.

As for my understanding, the only way for a Holy God and a lost humanity to have fellowship is to find a way to have things in common. We find that way and means in a new birth made possible by the work Christ accomplished at Calvary and in a tomb, borrowed by Him for three days, left empty. It is through the miracle of the new birth, which means being born from above (**John 3:7**), that a believer becomes “a partaker of the divine nature” **2 Peter 1:4**. By that process we find the common ground or place necessary for fellowship between a Holy God and sinful man to happen and that common ground and place is in the person of Jesus Christ. By trusting in Him, the life that is inherent in Him becomes inherited by the one trusting in Christ making fellowship with God, as our Father, possible. If this isn’t shouting ground, I don’t know what is!

Because of the new birth we become a recipient of a new life and because of those two things we can have continual, unbroken fellowship with God *if* we walk as we ought and where we ought...more about that in a moment. I’m not at all sure as to why God desires fellowship with a redeemed sinner such as I, but I am glad He does.

Verse 4 states something powerful and plain. Here is another purpose for John’s writing. It tells how “joy may be full.” There is only way to have full joy and that is to be in fellowship with the Father. Joy is not the same as happiness. Happiness has to do with what happens, but the “joy” John is referring to is something that is within regardless of the circumstances without. It is, actually, a part of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 2:27**).

Allow me to say something I feel to be extremely important. In this letter we discover important things about fellowship and yet nothing about relationship. The reason? I believe relationship with the Father is assumed. Remember, this is a very intimate letter. It is a letter written to the members of God’s family. It is written to His *barins* or born ones. It is extremely important to understand that in a family, fellowship may and will be broken as the result of many things, **but those things, whatever they may be, never change the fact of relationship.**

THE PRIVILEGE verses 5-7

In this day of the final apostasy that directly precedes the second coming of Christ (**2 Thess. 2:3**), the truths presented in this letter ought to be examined closely by all who name the name of Christ. In this day when men are turning the “grace of

God into lasciviousness” (**Jude 4**) the truths presented by John should be studied closely and propagated loudly. For John, there is no middle of the road. Man is either saved or lost. He is either in the light or in the darkness. If we are to have fellowship with God there must be a break with a life style of sin. Again, we are about to see it is either light or darkness, but not both.

Verse 5 is an amazing verse! It is one of my favorites. It is easy to understand. It presents no mystery: it is simply a great truth about God and what He is and yet there is nothing simple about God and what He is. I am not a physicist so I will make no attempt to explain light. I will simply declare or make known, as John did, that God is light! I do know that light and darkness cannot coexist. Darkness cannot drive out light but light can drive out darkness. I also know light cannot be defiled by darkness but it can and does reveal defilement. Let me illustrate. When light passes through a glass of dirty water it does not become dirty because it passes through dirty water but it does reveal that the water is dirty. Isn't that what **Ephesians 5:13** states?

Without explaining, we find John declaring that God is light. One of the reasons for this assertion is the aged Apostle is taking a stand against something known as “antinomianism.” This was another heresy being propagated in that day by a group known as the Nicolaitans mentioned in the **Revelation 2:6, 15**. To put it simply, they taught lawlessness. Actually, that is what antinomianism means, lawlessness. So, John took a stand against this false teaching that proclaimed someone who lives in sin can have fellowship with God. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John says clearly, that is a total impossibility! There are no exceptions to the fact and the fact is **there can be no fellowship between light and darkness**.

As in his Gospel, John presents God as light. He wanted us to know about God in a way and means by which we could perceive and understand Him, as least to some degree. God wants to be known.

When I think of light I think of something pure. We are not given a definition of God here we are just told that He is light. I believe this speaks of God's glory, His radiant beauty, His complete purity, and the fact of His total, stainless holiness to which no man can approach.

I love the way John express the fact that God is light when he says “and in him is no darkness at all.” He was saying there isn't even the tiniest little speck of dirt in or on Him. To that I say “Amen!”

In **verse 6** we find a truth laid down which is easily understood. The verse begins with “If we say....” A person can profess anything he or she chooses to but there is a way and means of testing their profession and it is in watching the walk of the one professing. We can say anything we choose to say but just because we say something doesn’t mean it is true. John tells us here how we can find whether or not a person is a liar. They can be tested. They are tested by their walk or their life style and behavior. Those two things must match their profession. If they do not, then they are sinners and not saints.

This is a bold statement. John says, regardless of what one says or professes, if that person has sin as a habit of life or as a life style of sin, that person has **no fellowship** with God and is, actually, a liar. Talk about thunder! There are a lot of folks claiming to have fellowship with God when in reality they do not. It is impossible for darkness to have fellowship with light. A person who is “walk(ing)” in darkness, which is not of God, is not walking in fellowship with God. Any person who is habitually sinning actually shows he or she is a sinner. If his or her behavior is in the realm and sphere of sin, their actions speak louder than their words and they are therefore, a sinner. I didn’t say that, the Holy Spirit did through the Apostle.

Verse 7 continues with this thought. Please take note how the verse begins. It begins with that amazing little word “But...” which means, on the other hand! How wonderful! Here we are told fellowship between God and man is possible. But it must be according to God’s expectation, not man’s. If man chooses to walk in the light or according to God laws, expectations, and provisions, man can fellowship with God, otherwise, there can be no fellowship. Fellowship with us is something God Himself desires. This truth amazes me! I can understand how or even why man would desire to have fellowship with God, but it is not apparent to me as to why God desires to have fellowship with man; especially with a man like me.

In this verse we find John to be a realist. He understands although a man has been saved by the grace of God he is still imperfect. It is true he has a perfect salvation but it is also true he is still a possessor of a fallen nature and is, therefore, imperfect. On occasion he will miss the mark (**Romans 3:23**). Even though he does occasionally miss the mark, he **does not** make sin a life style or a habit of life. He **does not** walk in sin or, in other words, sin continuously. It was Charles Spurgeon that said “God will not allow His children to sin successfully.” I like that statement. It is true.

When the eternal Godhead formulated the plan of salvation, He made ample provision for the saved but imperfect man. He knows our nature better than we do ourselves. This truth is seen in the feast of Pentecost as shown in **Leviticus 23:15-22**. Without going into detail, although the effort would prove fruitful, please take note of the fact leaven (which is **always** a type or picture of sin) was to be placed in the two loaves of bread which are a picture of Jew and Gentile coming together in one body to create a new entity, the Church. This was something keep secret in the Old Testament.

It is important that we see the leavened bread was placed in an oven. The heat and fire related to an oven speaks of judgment. Fire, as you know, is a cleansing agent. As the bread was subjected to the heat of the oven, the leaven was taken care of. So our sins, all of them, were subjected to the fire of God's judgment as they were placed on Jesus as the sinner's substitute when He died on an old rugged cross at a place called Calvary.

It was there our sins were atoned for once and for all: all of them not just some of them! All our sins, past, present, future, were "laid on him" (**Isaiah 53:6**) when He was suspended between Heaven and Earth. In fact, when He died for us, all our sins were future. When He died, we had not yet committed any sin although all of those we would commit were known then by an Omniscient God.

Remember I told you I would try and emphasize something about the suffix "eth" found throughout this epistle by John in my introduction? Well, here is my first opportunity to do so. Please understand I am not a Greek scholar. I have enough trouble with the English language. But I have learned a few things from men who are scholars and found a few nuggets along the way in studying after them.

The word "cleanseth" in this **verse 7**, as I have been taught, is a translation of a verb tense in the Greek language known as *present tense*. This refers to an action taken in the past that continues in the present to have continual results. This means that once an act has taken place in the past it continues into the present time and beyond in order to produce the same action or result as it did in the past, especially when it is in what is known as the *indicative mood*. This speaks of "action in progress" or "a state of persistence."

Most modern Bible translations (all of which I believe are corrupt because of the source from which are translated, from the corrupt Wescott/Hort Greek New Testament) fail to employ the usage of the "-eth" suffix. One of the arguments used by those publishers is that that language is, archaic. What a weak and sad

excuse. But there was a reason for its usage in the King James Bible. According to the Merriam-Webster New Collegiate Dictionary, the “-eth” was “the Middle English ending of the present indicative third person singular.”

I now quote from an on-line source, home.hiswaay.net “The Greek present tense was the tense of continuous action, while the aorist showed punctiliar or an unextended point of time action. The distinction between the present and aorist is sometimes lost in some modern translations. Others, intent on showing the continuous action of the present indicative use an English participle (i.e. going, doing, abiding). But then, the question is, how can one show the Greek present tense? The KJV clearly is the superior for the student who wants the distinction between the present indicative aorist, and the present participle. The KJV is a scholarly translation.” (The King James Version / A Scholarly translation: Windell H. Gann, ©1974.)

Allow me to add one other quick bit of information in relation to this interesting point of language. The number one rule of proper Biblical interpretation to always remember is “context, context, context.” All things **MUST** be determined by context. The place where we find words ending in “-eth,” depending on the context where found will help easily determine the meaning and purpose of the word in question. This rule applies to the Greek to English translation and will be seen to produce many precious nuggets of truth. We will see this to be true as we continue our study in **1 John**.

Before I move on to our next lesson, allow me to say although I don’t know how blood cleanseth, God does and says so. But may I also say, it’s not just any blood that can do this. It must be “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (**1 Peter 1:19**) to the work necessary.

In the Old Testament we find in **Leviticus 11:17** that God gave to the children of Israel the blood on the altar to make an atonement of sin. All the multiplied gallons of blood shed across the centuries and millenniums, none of it could accomplish what the blood of the Lamb of God accomplished. The blood of all those bullocks, lambs, goats, rams, and doves simply covered sin. But, Peter declared, the blood of “Jesus Christ (God’s Son) cleanseth us from all sin.” And the good thing is, it constantly continues to do so. How precious is that?!