

A Practical Study of 1 JOHN
“Fellowship With The Father”
Study Number One
1 John 1:1-4
Fellowship is Restored by Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION:

1 John is written as a book to teach us about FELLOWSHIP.

The key verse to the whole book of 1 JOHN is verse 3. 1 John is written by the apostle John. John is one of the most prolific authors in the New Testament.

- 1. He first wrote the Gospel of John to convince the world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**
- 2. Secondly, he writes the book of Revelation while he is exiled on the Isle of Patmos**
- 3. And then he writes these little epistles in old age when he is back from Patmos in the city of Ephesus where his life ends.**

Now the reason that he is picked by the Spirit of God to write a book that would deal with something like this is the very fact that this man John had a drastic change in his life. There are only 3 words that describe John before Jesus and those 3 words are:

1. ANGER
2. AMBITION and
3. ANTAGONISM

John and his brother James were called the Sons of Thunder when they came in among the 12. He was also one of personal ambition. He wanted to sit on the right or on the left in the Kingdom.

And he was a man of antagonism. When there was a guy preaching and teaching although he was not a part of their group he had to take care of that situation. And he also had the famous experience of trying to make reservations in a Samaritan village to spend the night and getting turned down. He very graciously and scripturally said “Lord, call fire out of heaven and wipe this place out.” That is John the apostle before Christ began to change his life.

We are amazed when we see John’s pen drip with love. We are amazed when we see John sheltered close to Jesus. We are amazed when we see John so intimate and so personal with the Christ but that is the key as to why John was the man he became in his old age. He was a man who kept company with Jesus. When he met Jesus, life was changed forever.

What we are going to learn in this particular study is that God expects our lives to be progressively changing more like Jesus and the basis for that is our fellowship

with the Lord.

The Gospel of John points to the PAST and paints the picture of Christ.

The book of Revelation points to FUTURE and tells us what is yet to come.

But the epistles point to the PRESENT and tell us that fellowship out of relationship will change our lives!

His purpose in writing this book is to help you understand what is a vital and necessary ingredient and that is you must be a person who is equipped to have FELLOWSHIP with a Holy God.

Now some of the MAIN THEMES in the five chapters are:

MUTUAL CHRISTIAN LOVE

ABIDING IN CHRIST

HOW TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

THE CHILDREN OF GOD

THE CHRISTIAN OF THE WORLD and

YOU WILL SEE THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD IN THE BOOK

There are 7 MAJOR CONTRASTS in the book for instance. You are going to see:

- 1. LIGHT VS. DARKNESS**
- 2. THE FATHER VS. THE WORLD**
- 3. CHRIST VS. THE ANTICHRIST**
- 4. GOOD WORKS VS. EVIL WORKS**
- 5. THE HOLY SPIRIT VS. ERROR**
- 6. LOVE VS. PRETENSE**
- 7. THE GOD-BORN VS. OTHERS**

And then there are SEVEN KEY WORDS to the book:

- 1. LOVE**
- 2. KNOW**
- 3. ABIDE**
- 4. WORLD**
- 5. LIFE**
- 6. LIGHT and**
- 7. DARKNESS**

Most little commentaries that you will read on 1 John have a very simple outline. And that is taking something very profound and making it simple.

- 1. GOD is LIGHT**
- 2. GOD is LIFE**
- 3. GOD is LOVE**

And that basically is the content of the book when you look at those three things. He is light, He is life and He is love. But I think it misses the whole business of FELLOWSHIP and why the book was really written and how it can get to where we live and be relevant to what is going on in our lives right now.

So we have called the series “FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER” springing off of verse 3. And the 12 studies that we are going to pursue are fellowship with the Father seen in these various aspects. Today we are going to just take a little time to look at “Fellowship is Restored by Jesus Christ” – Chapter 1:1-4.

Now I need to define the word FELLOWSHIP and then draw some distinctions before we can get in.

What is the meaning of the word FELLOWSHIP? The dictionary says:

it is a “community of interest or feeling,”

it is a “communion as between members of the same church,”

it is described as “friendliness,”

it is “an association of persons having similar tastes, interests,”

“a comradeship, companionship,”

it is being willing to take part with other people, a taking part with others,”

it is a “sharing,”

it is “a group of people having similar tastes and interests.”

Do you have that kind of feeling with God this morning?

Now be honest with me okay. Some people who are really honest will say this. “You know I don’t really feel close to God.” And you can almost predict that when they say that they also don’t feel very close to their fellowman.

Because your VERTICAL relationship oftentimes indicates your HORIZONTAL. And when you have problems on the horizontal it is also a good indication that you are not very close up there either. They just kind of seem to go together.

How many times have you heard Christians say “you know I just don’t feel like God is there. And I seem to go through this routine of reading the Bible and saying a few prayers and nothing happens. It is like God does not open the skies or talk to me. Heaven is brass and I am just speaking to the silence.”

Now God’s original intention in the creation of man was for #1, priority, UNION and COMMUNION with Himself. That is the bottom line. God created man to have relationship with Him. He created the entire universe, everything else and then He creates man to relate to. Relationship describes in one word why God created you – for relationship!

Then God looked down and saw man as being lonely and so He created woman so man could have relationship both on the horizontal and on the vertical. That is the original plan that He had.

Now do you remember the story of MARY and MARTHA in the gospel of Luke chapter 10? Here immediately when Christ comes to visit for hospitality Martha is very, very busy in the kitchen. And it is like these two women are supposed to describe the spiritual and the unspiritual and because I am a young mother and I have everything to do I am going to be a Martha and not a Mary. That is not the picture at all. The picture is priority. It is not wrong to be working in the kitchen and to get things ready but it is wrong for you to be fussed up and bothered over everything when you have neglected the most important thing and that is to spend

time with the Lord. It is priority. It is not an either/or. You do not choose to be a Martha who is encumbered about by much serving or to be a precious little Mary who sits at the feet of Jesus and does not do anything all day long. That is not the picture. It is who is in first place.

And what does Jesus say when Martha comes in hot and bothered and frustrated by the fact that her sis is letting her do all the dirty work in the kitchen? What does the Lord say? Remember the phrase? “One thing is needful.”

That says Matthew 6:33

Seek first His kingdom and His righteous, and all these things will be added to you.

You see you were not chosen first to serve Him, but rather TO BE WITH HIM. Out of relationship comes sacrificial service. And when we try to do the other before relationship it is sound and fury signifying nothing and filled with total anxiety and exhaustion.

You see the Lord really says to Martha, don't just do something, sit there. And that kind of runs contrary to everything we think.

Hardest thing in the Bible is Psalms 46

Be still and know that I am God.

You see Martha was occupied FOR Christ, Mary was occupied WITH Christ. Martha was doing FOR Him, Mary was receiving FROM Him.

And you receive from Him that you might in turn be able to give to others. And yet it is so easy to be able to get involved in service because you can skate around with the right vocabulary and the right language among Christians and never really get serious and down to earth.

When your mind is in harmony with the Father's mind and your heart is responding to the Father's love and your will is obeying His will; you then can have FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD and not before.

Dr. Jack Mitchell said this:

If you can't fellowship with God's people, it's because you are out of fellowship with God.

Can I say something? If you are out of fellowship with God this morning there are 2 main reasons for it.

- 1. Number one, you have never received Christ as Savior. Oh sure you have been in church. Sure you have gone through a lot of motions. Sure you have done a lot of things. But you have never really closed out with Jesus Christ. That is possible. And that is the whole basis for fellowship. There must be relationship before there can be fellowship.**

2. **And secondly, maybe you are here and you are out of fellowship with God, you are in relationship but you are out of fellowship. And the reason you are out of fellowship is because communication has been broken.**

There is a HUGE TALL WALL that separates you and God.

And somebody said it so well:

If You and God feel at a distance. Guess who moved?

Who was it that broke the appointment in the Garden when sin was involved? God did not do it! He wants the relationship! He longs for it! And His cry, "Adam where are you!" is a consuming passion of God even though sin is involved. Deal with it! And run back into relationship.

1. **Now if that is true maybe there is some sin which has not been dealt with.**
2. **But maybe you have some areas of the Bible that you are not obedient to and the Spirit of God has been hitting you so many times about that but you are just resistant and you have your neck bowed and you just are not going to do it and you are out of fellowship. Of course you are going to be until you are willing to be obedient.**

3. And then maybe, just maybe, there is something that is so sensitive that God wants to reveal to you but He is not going to until you manifest the fact that you really have a need and that you want to respond to this God who has a need for fellowship with you by you responding by saying “God I need you!” and run into His presence.

My prayer for this series of studies is that the Holy Spirit would accomplish some deep work in your life.

Let us take a look at just four verses and I will wrap it up.

“Fellowship is Restored by Jesus Christ” – Chapter 1 Verses 1 to 4.

Now the KEY VERSE for STUDY NUMBER ONE is VERSE 2.

And the KEY VERSE to the WHOLE BOOK is VERSE 3.

Each study will have a key verse.

There was a small child who went to church with his parents and when he knelt down to say his prayers before going to bed that evening he prayed this prayer: “Dear Lord, we had such a good time at church today. I wish You could have been there, too!”

You know sometimes that is the message that we communicate when it comes to fellowship.

I think it is very important for you to understand the distinction between RELATIONSHIP and FELLOWSHIP. First of all when we come into relationship it is through the new birth by receiving Christ by faith.

That is John 10:28, 29.

I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

When you come to Christ you are born again by the Spirit into God's family.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him to them gave He the right or the authority to become the sons and daughters of God.

You are His sons and daughters as a result of the new birth. When I am using the term RELATIONSHIP I am talking about that. Nothing will ever change that. If you are here this morning and you have come to know Christ that will never change. We are not dealing with the eternal destiny of your soul. This book 1 John is written to Christians. Not to people who are out of relationship. The difference is you will never change what has happened by the new birth.

You will die as a son and a daughter of God no matter how miserably your life manifests being out of fellowship with Him. Any more than you will entertain for a minute a serious thought of forsaking a relationship with one of your children no matter how rebellious they become, no matter how turned off they become towards you. It is a relationship that is established forever. The two of you came together and in the fruit of the womb was a child that is yours forever. You would not forsake that relationship. The relationship is established and you are secure in that. If you have come to Christ you know that.

But what about FELLOWSHIP? Fellowship is something totally different than relationship.

In a relationship you can either be in fellowship or out of fellowship at any given moment. The best illustration of that is your wife, your husband and your children. Any moment you can be in relationship but out of fellowship.

You can already have had a tiff while you all were driving to get here. You see you can be in relationship but you are out of fellowship. You are still married you just are not talking to each other and you are upset with each other because there is something that needs to be dealt with. Handle those things that are stopping the flow of the fellowship.

It is the Lord's desire that the #1 thing in the life of anybody who was born again by the Spirit into his family is to spend time with Him in fellowship, period! Nothing is more important than that!

There is nothing, absolutely nothing that is in your life today that is more important than that #1 thing, your fellowship with Him.

You see if Satan can attack this area in your life as a believer he has stifled the work of the Spirit in making you more Christlike because you have become like the one with whom you spend your time. And if you are spending your time in botched up priorities living for this world system, living for your own selfish satisfaction, you are going to start looking a heck of a lot like your father, the devil. You are going to give yourself over to those things and your life is going to be miserable when you fail to recognize that.

Dave Dravecky wrote a book called *Come Back* and in his second book *When You Can't Come Back* he hit a nerve and I think it is a nerve that is a problem with a lot of us. He said this:

Another one of my problems was that I kept trying to keep score with God, just as I did when I was a ballplayer. To a professional baseball player, everything is tied to performance. Your batting average. Runs batted in. Number of errors. For a pitcher your ERA was the main statistic everyone looked at. The letters stand for Earned Run Average.

It means the average number of runs you allow to score in nine innings. So if your ERA is three, that means on an average you let the opposing team score three runs in the course of a game. The lower the pitcher's ERA, the better chance his team has of winning. If I went nine innings and gave up a minimal number of hits, no walks, and maybe one or two runs, my manager and teammates would give me a pat on the back and acknowledge my performance. But all of a sudden, there was no scoreboard, no manager to pat me on the back and let me know how I was doing.

That is not God's primary priority and so Dravecky is saying this is the tension that was feeling as he was trying to learn how to walk with God.

Dr. Mitchell put it this way:

The heart of God yearns for the fellowship of His people. We hear men speak of how we ought to have fellowship with God, and rightly so. But do we ever think that the Lord yearns and longs for our fellowship? This was why God created man, but man failed God. This was why God redeemed sinners, in order that He might have someone with whom He could have fellowship.

You see the little word CHILDREN is just going to come up over and over and over again out of the text. It is just a Holy God saying through this beloved apostle "the key thing I want from you is to spend time with Me." You know I am the way, the truth and the life."

v. 1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life--

Isn't that neat? Notice what John starts with? He starts with Jesus. When a person starts with Jesus you know they are on track.

The very first thing John starts with is the person the Lord Jesus, that one who was from the beginning.

Now in the Bible you have 3 BEGINNINGS:

1. You got Genesis 1:1 "In the BEGINNING [*when*] God created the heavens and the earth."
2. In John 1:1 you have "In the BEGINNING, [*as time began*] was the Word, and the Word was with God."
3. And here you have the third beginning. This is the beginning of Jesus Christ taking on human flesh. It is marking the incarnation of Christ and John starts with that. "That which was [*Jesus*] from the BEGINNING."

And then John wants to tell you about Him. He wants to say "that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life--"

Jesus Christ is from the beginning. So He is the eternal Son of God.

John 8:58 Jesus said:

Jesus said “I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.”

John 17:5 after it is all over in the garden He says:

Glorify Me with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

He is the eternal Son of God.

But the next statements just blows you away. He touches the human senses in 3 areas:

- 1. That which we have HEARD.**
- 2. That which we are SEEING.**
- 3. And that which we are FEELING, our hands have touched concerning the Word of Life.**

How did John have this experience?

He was “HEARD” on the Mount saying, “Seek first the kingdom of God”

He was “HEARD” “I give to them eternal life”

He was “HEARD” “Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me,”

He was “HEARD” “I am the resurrection and the life,”

He was “HEARD” commanding the wind and the waves. He was “HEARD” saying, “Peace, be still,”

He was “HEARD” when he said, “Lazarus, come forth,”

He was “HEARD” “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

He was “SEEN” confounding the theologians at twelve.

He was “SEEN” and recognized as the Lamb of God by John the Baptist.

He was “SEEN” by an outcast woman at the well. He spoke of Himself being the Messiah.

He was “SEEN” walking on the water.

He was “SEEN” hanging on a cross.

He was “SEEN” in the upper room and on the shores of Galilee in a resurrected body.

He was “SEEN” by two distraught disciples as they walked on the road to Emmaus.

He was “SEEN” by over 500 at one time after the resurrection.

He was “TOUCHED” by the hand of Peter as he was sinking in the waves.

He was “TOUCHED” by Thomas at invitation in his unbelief that Christ was really alive.

He was “TOUCHED” by John as he leaned against his breast in the Last Supper.

He was “TOUCHED” by the woman with the issue of blood and immediately she was made well.

Yes, these great witnesses come together and they say, we HEARD, we SAW, we TOUCHED.

1 Samuel 3 dear Samuel comes into Eli’s presence on three occasion and Eli says go back and say,

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Does the Lord listen? Does the Lord hear? Does the Lord respond?

Isaiah 30:21

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

How is He HEARD today? He is heard today by speaking through the Word of God. And don't you be deceived by these people who are saying "God told me this." You want chapter and verse. He speaks to us through His written Word.

How is He TOUCHED? He is touched and we are touched by our prayer life.

And He is SEEN in our lives as we become more and more Christlike.

He is HEARD by others as we in turn speak His Word.

Jesus Christ is available and He is the "Word of Life," last phrase, to know Him is to have life.

Now our key verse for study one, verse 2.

v. 2 and the life was made visible, and we have seen [it] and we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us--

Is there something about these first two verses that jumps out at you? It is the word LIFE.

Life in verse 1 “the Word of Life.”

It is “the life” in verse 2 and then it is “eternal life” in verse 2.

It is life, life, life. It all begins by relationship with Christ.

Verse 2 tells us why He was made visible. He was made visible and we have seen it and we have been a witness, we are proclaiming to you the reason – it was so that you and I might have eternal life.

Who “was with the Father and was made visible to us”

Now why was it necessary for God to be made visible in the person of Christ?

That is the key verse to the study.

Fellowship is restored by Jesus Christ. There can be no fellowship with a Holy God until the sin problem is dealt with. Whether it is initially by relationship or as a believer out of fellowship, it must be dealt with.

And He is made visible for the whole purpose of restoring the possibility for fellowship.

Now let me give you some verses.

Amos 3:3

**Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?**

John 9:25

**“Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I
do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”**

Isaiah 59

Your sins and iniquities have separated you.

Psalms 66:16

Your sins and iniquities have separated you.

**Jesus Christ lost fellowship with the Father while He
was hanging on the cross when He cried that fourth cry
and orphan cry “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God,
My God, why have you forsaken Me?” In that moment
He experienced that so that out of it could come:**

REDEMPTION the price paid for sin

RESTORATION so we now could have a

RELATIONSHIP with Him and the

FELLOWSHIP that comes from it

Get this down and get it clear. RELATIONSHIP MUST PRECEDE FELLOWSHIP.

The question we are asking ourselves in this first study is have we established a basis for fellowship by coming to know Christ as Savior? Have you done that? Do you know that has been done?

Verse 3, key verse to the whole book!

v. 3 that which we have seen and heard [and we already know who that is back in verse 1] we are proclaiming also to you [we are telling you about Jesus and the reason we are doing that], in order that you also may be having fellowship with us [we would love to have that relationship]; and the fellowship which is ours [the kind we are having] is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now can I take those three verses in sequence for just a second? I know what you are saying, “haven’t you already done that?” Yes, but let me do it in summary fashion:

In verse 1 “WE HAVE SEEN with our eyes.”

In verse 2 “the life was MADE VISIBLE.”

And in verse 3 “that which WE HAVE SEEN, [again] and heard we are proclaiming also to you.”

Love is like the spokes of a wheel: when you get close to the axle you get close to each other.

And that is the picture of what is described in verse 3. The closer you get to Jesus Christ the closer you get to each other. Jesus Christ is the answer to fellowship, He is the basis, He is the foundation, He is the only basis for us to be able to proclaim that we are having fellowship with the Father and it is manifested in fellowship with one another.

You see you really do need me and, yes, I really do need you. We need each other. There are no Lone Rangers in the family of God. And you can tell the relationship with the Holy God by the relationship with the brothers and sisters in the body.

God designed you, to have fellowship, number one with Him and number two with other believers. Do not miss the purpose. He wanted to give you warm bodies around you to encourage you and to help you along the way but it has to start with fellowship first along the vertical and then it spills over into the horizontal.

“And the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Charlie Brown has come to his nemesis, Lucy, she has her little psychiatrist booth open and she is charging 5 cents for the answer to any question. And Charlie Brown comes and he says in response “Can you cure loneliness?”

She says, “I can cure anything.”

And Charlie responds by saying, “Can you cure deep-down, bottom-of-the-well, and black-forever loneliness?”

“All for the same nickel?” she says.

And some of us think the same thing when our schedules are so jammed with people who are just reaching out for somebody to understand.

People are lonely and this loneliness is so very, very real.

Earl Jabay helped me with it in his book *The God-Players* when he said:

We sent God into exile. We then made our fellows either opponents or stepping stones. In the case of the first, we knocked people down; in the second instance, we built people up; but in either case, it was always with our self-elevation in mind. Inevitably the consequence, however, was [*always the same*] loneliness.

Remember Charlie Chaplin when he remarked and he had found that there was no life on Mars, “I feel [*very*] lonely.”

A lot of people are lonely today and are lonely by choice. Maybe they have made some wrong choices and they are lonely because of it but remember it is their choice. You never find love by looking for it.

You only find love by giving it. And when you respond to the God of the universe and you have come into fellowship with Him, out of that fellowship is going to come some brothers and sisters that want to enter into your life.

In *The Making of a Christian Leader* by Ted Engstrom he says: listen if you want to be a good leader let me give you ten suggestions.

- 1. Stop talking!**
- 2. Put the talker at ease.**
- 3. Show him that you want to listen.**
- 4. Remove distractions.**
- 5. Empathize with him.**
- 6. Be patient.**
- 7. Hold your temper.**
- 8. Go easy on argument and criticism.**
- 9. Ask questions.**
- 10. Stop talking!**

You know the problem with us so many times is we are suffering from oral diarrhea. We get up in the morning and we just let it fly to anybody who wants to listen but we never stop and let somebody else speak to us and give us input and give us help. Stop talking and be still and know that He is God.

In *Living by the Book* by Howard Hendricks, he says:

Many Christians are like poor photographs--overexposed and underdeveloped. They've had plenty

of input from the Word of God, but what difference has it made in their lives? Spiritual growth is a commitment to change. And yet, the human heart resists nothing as strongly as it resists change. We will do anything to avoid it.

The psalmist repeats “His love endures forever.”

What else do you need to know? He repeats it twenty six times in the psalm. “His love endures forever.”

And then Hendricks says:

Shortly after I became a Christian, someone wrote in the flyleaf of my Bible these words: “This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.” That was true then, and it’s still true today. Rusty Bibles always lead to dirty lives. In fact, you are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold.

The choices are there.

Stephen Charnock in *Attributes of God* says:

When you beg of him the melting of your rocky hearts, the dashing in pieces your strong corruptions, the drawing his beautiful image in your soul, the quickening your dead hearts, and reviving your drooping spirits, and supplying your spiritual wants, consider him as one ‘able to do abundantly,’ not only

‘above what you can ask,’ but ‘above what you can think.’

Psalm 27:4

**One thing I ask of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.**

**v. 4 And as for us, we are writing these things in order
that your joy might be filled.**

**And I conclude with this, let me show you the
progression of these verses because there is an
equation here I want you to put down and I want you to
examine your hearts today on the basis on this:**

**In verse 1 we have presented with the Person of
Jesus Christ--God in human flesh.**

**In verse 2 He brings eternal life through a
relationship.**

**In verse 3 that eternal life issues in fellowship with
God the Father and with others.**

And in verse 4 this fellowship brings us joy.

All right here it is:

THE PERSON OF CHRIST + ETERNAL LIFE + FELLOWSHIP = JOY.

Puts all four of the verses together.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST + ETERNAL LIFE + FELLOWSHIP = JOY.

Alright examine it. You say “well, I sure didn’t come very joyful.” Okay what has happened?

Joy is the first thing to go when you are out of fellowship with God.

**When David was living in sin what did he say?
“Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”**

You say, “But I’m really having a hard time. I’m going through some very difficult times right now.”

John 15:11 Just a few hours before the cross Jesus said:

These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace, in the world you shall have tribulation but be of great joy I have overcome the world. I have spoken these things to you that your joy might be full.

Philippians 4:4 Just a few months before the apostle becomes a martyr he says:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Paul is living in a sewer cesspool in the Mamertine prison when he writes that.

2 Corinthians 6:10

As sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

It is a JOY not dependent on outward circumstances. It is a fruit of the Spirit and it is a product of FELLOWSHIP with the Father.

That joy measures a right relationship with Him. And if you do not have that joy today it is either you do not have a relationship or you are out of fellowship. The bottom line from John is when you have fellowship you have joy.

Now you can GRIEVE the Holy Spirit by SIN in your life.

You can QUENCH the Holy Spirit by SAYING NO.

And have you ever thought in your long-legged life that just maybe the absence of joy has to do something with a wrong relationship or being out of fellowship and that the reason that you do not have that joy is because you have been living with a false premise that you are in fellowship and you are not and the joy is not there

and you know it. Like a ship's sail you can be filled with the wind of the spirit and joy is the evidence of that.

You are always going to find that people who really are walking with God love to laugh. I mean it is just an evidence of the fact that they are Christians.

G.K. Chesterton said:

I am all in favor of Laughing. Laughter has something in it in common with the ancient winds of faith and inspiration.

Laugh!

Have you read Barbara Johnson's new book? *Pack up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, Then Sit on the Lid and laugh!* If you have read the other three you have got a treat in store. This is a great one.

A good laugh can lift your spirits when you're tired and a little cranky. Recently, my good friend, Lynda, and I were driving to Yucaipa, California, about ninety miles away, for a weekend conference at a Baptist church. I had gotten up feeling a little weary that morning and was thinking how much fun it would be to just have a weekend off for a change, when Lynda asked me, "Do you ever get tired of spreading your joy and sharing your story?"

"Well, yes, I sure do," I admitted. "Sometimes I think I can't go over the SAME story, the SAME events,

the SAME details, ONE MORE TIME. In fact, I'm so tired of spreading joy I just wish I could stay home and never have to tell my story again."

As we turned off the freeway onto the road to Yucaipa, Lynda and I discussed what it was like to have the symptoms of burnout. I felt as if I had been experiencing just about ALL of them. Then, as we rounded a curve, a huge highway billboard loomed up on the right-hand side and on it were printed only three words in gigantic letters about twenty feet high: **SPREAD YOUR JOY!**

In smaller letters near the bottom of the sign was the notation, "Paid for by First Baptist Church, Yucaipa"—the very place where I was going to speak! Talk about SOMEONE sending me a message! We both burst out laughing simultaneously and then drove on down the road to the church where we had one of the best conferences ever.

My joy was abundant that day and the results were 110 percent. Many women came forward for prayer, and several decisions were made to come to the Lord. Some might say the sign appeared when it did by pure coincidence; but isn't it strange how "coincidences" happen? Afterward, I realized again that in spreading my joy, God had restored ME. **MY JOY WAS FULL!** As soon as I had a moment to myself, I told God I was sorry for my petulant outburst and I thanked Him for His reminder that as we pour out ourselves for others we ourselves are renewed!

Get off your duff and minister to the other brothers and sisters here and get a smile on your face.

And she says:

**When a bit of sunshine hits ye,
After passing of a cloud,
When a fit of laughter gits ye,
An' yer spine is feelin' proud.
Don't fergit to up and fling it
At a soul that's feelin' blue,
For the minute that ye sling it,
It's a boomerang to you!
(laughter)**

It is going to come back.

What is the key lesson in today's study?

Fellowship is restored by Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST, verse 1

+ ETERNAL LIFE, verse 2

+ FELLOWSHIP, verse 3

= JOY, verse 4.

CONCLUSION:

LESSON #1: Relationship must precede fellowship with a holy God.

LESSON #2: It is possible to be in relationship and out of fellowship.

LESSON #3: Fellowship with God is restored by Jesus Christ.

LESSON #4: When John speaks of Jesus Christ, he speaks of someone he has heard, he has seen, and he has touched.

LESSON #5: The longing of God's heart is for fellowship with us.

LESSON #6: God kept His appointment with Adam and Eve in the garden even after their sin.

LESSON #7: Jesus Christ + eternal life + fellowship = joy.

LESSON #8: Joy is the evidence that a person is in relationship and in fellowship with his heavenly Father.

Is that joy flooding your heart?

“And Can it Be That I Should Gain?”

Charles Wesley's good old hymn, listen:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.

There is an old Chinese proverb that says unless you change direction, you are likely to arrive at where you are headed. (laughter)

And that great theologian Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you're going, you might end up someplace else."

And as the wise old proverb of the Italian sailors said, "Who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock," if you do not surrender yourself.

I conclude with a story by Stanley Jones:

A man and his wife were at cross-purposes. Each was standing on his or her own rights. She felt she had a right to stay in bed in the mornings and let her husband get his own breakfast. So she stood on that right, or rather, she lay on it. She came to one of [those meetings] and made her surrender to Christ and was converted. When she asked: "What shall I do when I get home?" she was told that she should go and tell her

husband that she was the cause of all their troubles. “Oh,” she replied, “I couldn’t do that! That is the point at issue. I say he is the cause and he says I am.” “Well,” we said, “you go and pray about it.” She went home and got up the next morning and prepared her husband’s breakfast, which intrigued him. But he couldn’t help his usual dig: “Well, Miss High and Mighty, what did you learn at the [meeting]?” “I learned that I’ve been the cause of all our troubles.” She got up from her chair, came around beside him and knelt, folded her hands and said: “Please forgive me. I’m the cause of all our troubles.” Telling about it afterwards she said: “He came near upsetting the table to get down on his knees beside me. He blurted out, ‘You’re not the cause of all our troubles—I am.’” There they met each other—and God. Each surrendered to God, then they surrendered to each other and were free! Now that couple, instead of pecking at each other, is one. They are now a team going out and witnessing to others as to what surrender to Christ can mean, and they are winning many to the Way. They both found victory through surrender.

Whether it is a once-for-all surrender in a life crisis or a day-by-day surrender of the problems of life as they come up, the way out is—victory through surrender.

STUDY NUMBER ONE – 1 JOHN 1:1-4

FELLOWSHIP IS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST

KEY VERSE 1:2

v. 1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life—

v. 2 and the life was made visible, and we have seen [it] and we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us—

v. 3 that which we have seen and heard we are proclaiming also to you, in order that you also may be having fellowship with us; and the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

v. 4 And as for us, we are writing these things in order that your joy might be filled.

NOTES

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Relationship must precede fellowship with a holy God.

LESSON #2: It is possible to be in relationship and out of fellowship.

LESSON #3: Fellowship with God is restored by Jesus Christ.

LESSON #4: When John speaks of Jesus Christ, he speaks of Someone he has heard, he has seen, and he has touched.

LESSON #5: The longing of God's heart is for fellowship with us.

LESSON #6: God kept His appointment with Adam and Eve in the garden even after their sin.

LESSON #7: Jesus Christ + Eternal life + Fellowship = Joy.

LESSON #8: Joy is the evidence that a person is in relationship and in fellowship with his heavenly Father.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 John 1:1-4 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What do we learn from the very first statement of John about Jesus Christ?

3. Why is John in such a position to write with authority about Jesus Christ, according to verse 1?

4. Why do you suppose John calls Jesus the “Word of Life” in verse 1 and then makes two more references to this term, “life,” in verse 2?

5. What is John proclaiming, according to verse 3?

6. What is his purpose in writing this letter, according to verse 3?

7. What is the meaning of the word “fellowship”?

8. What result does John wish for in his writing, according to verse 4?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?
