

1 John 1:3 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
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Charts from Jensen's [Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [o eorakamen](#) (1PRAI) [kai akekoamen](#) (1PRAI) [apaggellomen](#) (1PPAI) [kai humin, hina kai humeis koinonian echete](#) (2PPAS) [meth' hemon. kai e koinonia de e emetera meta tou patros kai meta tou huiou autou Iesou Christou.](#)

Amplified: What we have seen and [ourselves] heard, we are also telling you, so that you too may realize and enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us. And [this] fellowship that we have [which is a distinguishing mark of Christians] is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ([ESVBible.org](#))

KJV: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

NLT: We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: We repeat, we really saw and heard what we are now writing to you about. We want you to be with

us in this - in this fellowship with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: That which we have seen with discernment and at present is in our mind's eye, and that which we have heard and at present is ringing in our ears, we are reporting also to you, in order that as for you also, you may be participating jointly in common with us [in our first-hand knowledge of the life of our Lord]. And the fellowship indeed which is ours, is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Young's Literal: that which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD WE PROCLAIM TO YOU ALSO: o eorakamen (1PRAI) kai akekoamen (1PRAI) apaggellomen (1PPAI) kai humin:

- **which:** 1Jn 1:1 Ac 4:20
- **proclaim:** 1Jn 1:5 Ps 2:7 22:22 Isa 66:19 Jn 17:25 Ac 13:32,41 20:27 1Co 15:1 Heb 2:12
- **you also:** Ac 2:42 Ro 15:27 Eph 3:6 Php 1:7 2:1 1Ti 6:2 Heb 3:1 1Pe 5:1
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

Most commentators interpret verse 3 as John picking back up with verse 1 after the parenthetical statement in verse 2. It can be illustrated this way: Verse 1---Parenthesis of Verse 2---Continuation of verse 1 in verse 3.

Hiebert summarizes verses 3 and 4

In 1Jn 1:3, 4 John advanced to the crucial significance of the Incarnation for himself and his readers. He summarized the content of the proclamation (1Jn 1:3a), indicated their aim in making that proclamation (1Jn 1:3b), asserted the true nature of their fellowship (1Jn 1:3c), and stated the intended goal in writing (1Jn 1:4). ([1 John 1:1-4 Exposition](#))

Spurgeon rightly exclaims concerning the apostle John...

What a leap from the fisherman to the Father's throne, from the poor, despised son of Zebedee up to the King of Kings! Oh, John, we would have fellowship with thee now! We will have fellowship with thy scorn and spitting (**See editorial note**), that we may have fellowship with thee, and with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

Editorial note: Assuming John wrote his epistles about 90AD, it was not long after penning this epistle that he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos "because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" Rev 1:9-[note](#). **May we who desire fellowship with him, be enabled to be willing to count the cost. Amen.**

What we have seen and heard we proclaim - John now links 1Jn 1:3 with verse one by repeating his statements about seeing and hearing Christ (he reverses the order placing sight before sound in this verse). Calvin says his repetition is so "that nothing might be wanting as to the real certainty of his doctrine (of Jesus Christ)." As one who had personally seen and heard the Eternal One, John again assures the reader that his testimony is absolutely reliable. As **Spurgeon** says "See how (the apostle John) does hammer this nail as if he will drive it fast! How he rings this bell that it may toll the death-knell of every doubt!"

Kenneth Wuest paraphrases it...

That which we have seen with discernment and at present is in our mind's eye, and that which we have heard and at present is ringing in our ears, we are reporting ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#))

Phillips has...

We repeat, we really saw and heard what we are now writing to you about ([John Paraphrase Online](#))

Adam Clarke...

We deliver nothing by hearsay, nothing by tradition, nothing from conjecture; we have had the fullest certainty of all that we write and preach.

G G Findlay feels that

John reiterates "what we have seen and heard" not by way of resuming the thread of an interrupted sentence,

but striking once more the key-note, on which he plays a further descant. We observe here, at the outset, the peculiar manner of our author. His thought progresses by a kind of spiral movement, returning continually upon itself, but in each revolution advancing to a new point and giving a larger outlook to the idea that it seeks to unfold. ([An Exposition of the Epistles of St John](#))

We have seen (3708)(*horao* - used 7x in 6v in 1Jn 1:1, 2, 3, 3:2, 3:6, 4:20 [2x]) refers not merely to the act of seeing, but also conveys the idea that there is the actual perception of what is seen. Notice John's use of "seen" is in the **perfect tense** which signifies, yes they saw Jesus and that image continues to be present in their mind. Wuest paraphrases it this way "we have seen it with discernment and have it in our mind's eye."

John wrote of that great day when they first saw the resurrected Christ...

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side (Nailed pierced scars, marks of cutting covenant with us, marks that He will bear throughout eternity signifying the unbreakable nature of His covenant with each of His followers! Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus for being the Messenger of the Covenant [Mal 3:1]! Amen). The disciples therefore rejoiced when **they saw** the Lord. (Jn 20:19, 10)

May God's Spirit so reveal the Resurrected Glorified Lamb of God to us through His Word of Truth, so that we too might have His image emblazoned forever in our mind's eye and with His Divine Visage ever before us, may we be motivated and energized by His Spirit to us to share His "image" with those who have never seen the Life, the Eternal One! Amen.

Heard (191)(*akouo*) means to hear with attention, to hear with the "ear" of the mind, to hear with understanding. **Akouo** is in the **perfect tense** which speaks of an abiding effect. When John wrote this letter, some 60 years had passed since he had last heard the voice of Jesus and yet, the words of His Lord continued to be a vivid truth in his heart! Imagine that you had heard Jesus speak! Would not His majestic words continue to reverberate and resonate in your mind for the rest of your days on earth? I think they would! **May we go to His Word desiring to hear from Him even as John first heard Him. And may this "foretaste" make us long for (and live for) eternity future when we shall have the holy privilege of hearing His voice...forever and ever! Amen!**

Kistemaker feels that by repetition of the verbs **seen** and **heard**, John

wants his readers to know the core of the apostolic message: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has appeared in human flesh." As an eyewitness and ear-witness, John is able to testify to the veracity of this message and proclaim what he has seen and heard. ([Simon J. Kistemaker: New Testament Commentary - James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude](#))

Proclaim (for emphasis repeating *proclaim* from 1Jn 1:2) (518) (*apaggello* from *apó* = from + *aggello* = tell, declare from *aggelos* = messenger, one who speaks in place of one who has sent him) means to bring a message from any person or place. It suggests the thought of passing on to others what has been given to them. And so in the present context the idea is that John is announces, reports or proclaims openly his testimony concerning Jesus Christ. He uses the **present tense** which describes continuous activity -- "we are continually reporting to you (what we saw and heard, the truth about Jesus)" or as Orr paraphrases it "*we make it our business to proclaim.*"

Findlay says **apaggello**

signifies the carrying of tidings or messages from the authentic source: we are the bearers to you of the word we received from Him.

In proclaiming the truth about Christ, John is following the pattern of his Lord. Matthew uses this same verb *apaggello* in quoting a Messianic prophecy that Jesus "shall **proclaim** (*apaggello*) to the Gentiles." (Mt 12:18)

Paul Apple comments: Jesus came to preach (to **proclaim**) and to disciple key leaders to reproduce that ministry of proclamation. We are not called to stifle this life, but to proclaim it to others. The mission of the apostles was sharing that life with others. We are not called upon to dream up the message; the revelation comes from God; we are commanded to pass it on.

John Trapp comments on John's phrase *we declare unto you...*

That (**Theophilus**-like) ye may be at a certainty, fully persuaded (Lk 1:1, 2, 3, Acts 1:1), having a plerophory (Full persuasion or confidence) or "full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of Christ," (Col. 2:2-note).

G G Findlay eloquently expounds on the sight and sounds of Jesus Christ which John perceived...

Observe the energy with which the apostle asserts the actuality of the revelation of the life of God in Jesus Christ. Thrice in three verses he reiterates "we have seen" it, twice "we have heard," and twice repeats "the life was manifested." The stupendous fact has always had its doubters and deniers. In any age of the world and under any system of thought, such a revelation as that made by Jesus Christ was sure to be met with incredulity. It is equally opposed to the superstitions and to the skepticisms natural to the human mind.

The mind that is not surprised and sometimes staggered by the claims of Christ and the doctrines of Christianity, that has not felt the shock they give to our ordinary experience and native convictions, has not awakened to their real import.

The doubt which, like that of Thomas at the resurrection, arises from a sense of the overwhelming magnitude, the tremendous significance of the facts asserted, is worthier than the facile and unthinking faith that admits enormous theological propositions without a strain and treats the profoundest mysteries as a commonplace.

St John feels that the things he declares demand the strongest evidence. He has not believed them lightly, and he does not expect others to believe them lightly. This passage goes to show that the Apostles were aware of the importance of historical truth; they were conscientious and jealously observant in this regard. Their faith was calm, rational and sagacious (of keen, farsighted penetration and judgment).

They were perfectly certain of the things they attested, and believed only upon commanding and irresistible evidence— evidence that covered the full extent of the case, evidence natural and supernatural, sensible and moral, scriptural and experimental, and practically demonstrative.

But the facts they built upon are primarily of the spiritual order, so that without a corresponding spiritual sense and faculty they are never absolutely convincing. Already in St John's old age the solvents of philosophical analysis were being applied to the Gospel history and doctrine. The Godhead incarnate, the manifestation of the infinite in the finite, of the eternal in the temporal— this was impossible and self-contradictory; we know beforehand, the wise of the world said, that such things cannot be. And so criticism set itself to work upon the story, in the interests of a false philosophy. The incarnation, the miracles, the resurrection, the ascension— what are they but a beautiful poetic dream, a pictorial representation of spiritual truth, from which we must extract for ourselves a higher creed, leaving behind the supernatural as so much mere wrappage and imaginative dress! This rationalism loudly asserts today; and this the Gnosticism of the later apostolic age was already, in its peculiar method and dialect, beginning to make out.

The Apostle John confronts the Gnostic metaphysicians of his time, and the Agnostic materialists of ours, with his impressive declaration. Behind him lies the whole weight of the character, intelligence and disciplined experience of the witnesses of Jesus. Of what use was it for men at a distance to argue that this thing and that thing could not be? "I tell you," says the great Apostle, "we have seen it with our eyes, we have heard Him with our very ears; we have touched and tested and handled these things at every point, and we know that they are so." As he puts it, at the end of his letter, "we know that the Son of God is come; and He hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true." (1Jn 5:20) The men who have founded Christianity and written the New Testament, were no fools.

They knew what they were talking about. No dreamer, no fanatic, no deceiver since the world began, ever wrote like the author of this Epistle. Every physical sense, every critical faculty of a sound and manly understanding, every honest conviction of the heart, every most searching and fiery test that can try the spirit of man, combine to assure us that the Apostles of Jesus Christ have told us the truth as they knew it about Him, and that things were even as they said and no otherwise. Ay, and God has borne witness to those faithful men through the ages since and put the seal to their testimony, or we should not be reading about these things today. ([An Exposition of the Epistles of St John](#))

Steven Cole applies the truths of this passage to all saints...

John (and some of the other apostles) wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the words that God wanted us to receive. Through these writings (our New Testament), we can enter into the same fellowship with God that the apostles enjoyed! If John and the other apostles had not proclaimed the message, we wouldn't know Christ today. The Great Commission that Jesus gave to them applies to us, also. If we don't proclaim to others the authoritative message of the King, how will they know and believe (see Ro 10:14,15)? God's method of imparting eternal life to those who are dead in their sins is through the proclamation of the word of life, the gospel. If you're not proclaiming God's revelation about Jesus Christ by your life and words, you're not

experiencing the fullness of true Christianity. ([1 John 1:1-3 The Tests of True Christianity](#))

SO THAT YOU TOO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US: hina kai humeis koinonian echete (2PPAS) meth' hemon

- **fellowship:** 1Jn 1:7 2:23,24 Jn 14:20-23 17:3,11,21 1Co 1:9,30 2Co 13:14 Php 2:1 3:10 Heb 3:14
- **with His Son:** 1Jn 5:10,11 Col 1:13 1Th 1:10
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

THE PURPOSE OF JOHN'S PROCLAMATION: PRODUCTION OF FELLOWSHIP

So that (hina) - Purpose clause explaining the purpose for his repetition. Always use these as an opportunity to slow down and ask "so what?" In so doing you are learning to **meditate** on the Scripture (See discussion of the value of recognizing and interrogating **terms of conclusion**). John's goal for his readers was genuine fellowship. Some commentators see this verse as expressive of John's entire purpose for writing First John. While it is clearly part of the purpose, John clearly states elsewhere his purpose includes passages like 1Jn 5:13, that his readers would have assurance regarding their salvation.

David Guzik writes...

Most people understand that the important things in life are not things at all - they are the relationships we have. God has put a desire for relationship in every one of us, a desire He intended to be met with relationships with other people, but most of all, to be met by a relationship with Him. In this remarkable letter, John tells us the truth about relationships - and shows us how to have relationships that are real, for both now and eternity. The purpose of the letter: to bring you into relationship with God.

You too may have fellowship with us - John desired that his readers might have fellowship with himself and the other apostles who had seen and conversed and had fellowship with Jesus and through Him with the Father. How could others have fellowship with the apostle John? After all they might never see or meet him personally. Clearly, what John is describing is only possible supernaturally. Only as we believe in Jesus Christ which John historically verifies can we have fellowship with the aged apostle. Christ is the common bond. When we believe we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God and from our former position in Adam, to our new, eternal position in Christ. In covenant oneness with Christ, all believers share His life, because He is now their life and in so doing they are united with each other in Him. Does that make sense? Anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ cannot possibly have in common this new life in Him.

Hiebert comments on "**you too**" writing that...

John's proclamation to his readers has a clear intended result horizontally, "that you also may have fellowship with us". The words "you also (too)" suggest that though the readers did not have the same personal experience with the incarnate Christ that the apostles had, yet they could experience the same spiritual fellowship with them.

Albert Barnes writes that when John says "**with us**" he means...

With us the apostles; with us who actually saw him, and conversed with him. That is, he wished that they might have the same belief, and the same hope, and the same joy which he himself had, arising from the fact that the Son of God had become incarnate, and had appeared among men. To "**have fellowship**," means to have anything in common with others; to partake of it; to share it with them, Acts 2:42; and the idea here is, that the apostle wished that they might share with him all the peace and happiness which resulted from the fact that the Son of God had appeared in Human form in behalf of men. The object of the apostle in what he wrote was, that they might have the same views of the Saviour which he had, and partake of the same hope and joy. This is the true notion of fellowship in religion. (Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical)

Have ([2192](#))(**echo**) means to possess and in the **present tense** implies a continual state of fellowship. John's point is that his readers by continuing to adhere to the full truth in Christ could continue to enjoy the full fruit of the revelation (the fruit being fellowship). Remember that false teachers were on the prowl and their lies and falsehoods would have the effect of disturbing the believer's fellowship with one another and with God the Father and Son. John was anxious that his readers would not allow the false teachers to mar or disrupt their mutual fellowship by perverting the truth about Jesus Christ. The application for believers today is to "stay close" to the Word of Truth so that you might be able to discern error ("Be a Berean" = Acts 17:11-note, Heb 5:14-note), for there is error that is pawned off as "spiritual." As an aside, one of the best ways to become a Berean and arm yourself against false

teaching which is rampant in our day is to learn and practice the skill of **inductive Bible study**.

Vincent comments on the verb **have** (have fellowship) explaining that

it expresses the enjoyment or realization of fellowship, as compared with the mere fact of fellowship....This form of expression occurs frequently in the New Testament, to denote the possession or experience of virtues, sensations, desires, emotions, intellectual or spiritual faculties, faults, or defects. It is stronger than the verb which expresses any one of these. For instance, *to have faith* is stronger than *to believe: to have life*, than *the act of living*. It expresses a distinct, personal realization of the virtue or fault or sentiment in question. **Ed**: It follows that "to have fellowship" is more significant than the act of fellowship.)

Spurgeon...

When fellowship is the sweetest, your desire is the strongest that others may have fellowship with you; and when, truly, your fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, you earnestly wish that the whole Christian brotherhood may share the blessing with you.

Fellowship (4 uses = 1Jn 1:3,6,7) (2842)(**koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common, belonging to several or of which several are partakers; related word = **koinonos** = partaker) means to share in common or to have communion (Which Webster defines as "intimate fellowship"). It denotes the active participation or sharing in what one has in common with others. **Koinonia** in this case a very special kind of sharing—entering into what John and the other apostles experienced with Christ. (See excellent article on **Fellowship**). Believers have **fellowship** vertically with the Triune God through His Son Christ Jesus and horizontally with other saints. The "vertical fellowship" precedes and makes possible the "horizontal fellowship" between believers.

Hiebert emphasizes that...

The nature of what is mutually shared molds the nature of the group. Here, as in Acts 2:42, the intimate bond of fellowship that unites the group is their common faith in Christ, based on the apostolic message. By its very nature the new life in Christ creates and stimulates the desire for such fellowship. The Christian life is a call not for isolation but for active participation with other believers in this new life.

Peter Toon notes that in secular Greek **koinonia** had several uses...

It was used of a business partnership, where two or more persons share the same business and are thus closely connected in work. Also it was used of marriage, of the shared life of two persons, a man and a woman, together. Further, it was sometimes used of a perceived relatedness to a god, such as Zeus. Finally, it was used to refer to the spirit of generous sharing in contrast to the spirit of selfish acquiring. ([Fellowship in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

Webster says that **share** implies that one as the original holder grants to another the partial use, enjoyment, or possession of a thing though it may merely imply a mutual use or possession.

When one considers the secular Greek use of **koinonia** to describe the marriage bed, one begins to get a glimmer of the incredible privilege we as finite believers have to be in communion with the infinitely holy God! **Oh Lord, open our eyes to the breadth and length and height and depth of this incredible truth, that the unsearchable riches of the truth of our partaking of the life of the Almighty might motivate us to live holy lives for the glory of the Lamb in a world which has gone "AWOL" from God!**

Is not fellowship with God in a sense a return to the idyllic sinless setting of the Garden of Eden, when apparently God walked with Adam in perfect fellowship! Satan as a snake tempted Adam to sin and with that sin the perfect union was broken. Now through the redemptive work of the Second Adam, Christ Jesus, believers can "walk with God". Neander writes that "*Through Christ God closes up the chasm that separated Him from the human race, and imparts Himself to them in the communion of the divine life.*"

Peter uses the related word **koinonos** explaining that

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become **partakers (koinonos)** of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2Pe 1:4-note)

Comment: Peter is not saying believers become "little gods" but he is saying that we are sharers in His nature. As new creatures in Christ we have His Spirit within us and we are in the process of sanctification, growing in conformity to Christ, with the hope (assurance) that one day in glory we will be like Him (1Jn 3:2).

Vincent writes that...

The true life in man, which comes through the acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, consists in fellowship with God and with man.

The Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words adds that...

The Father and Son have enjoyed communion with each other since before the creation of the world. When Jesus entered into time, His **fellowship** with the Father also entered into time. During the days of His ministry on earth, Jesus was introducing the Father to the disciples and initiating them into this **fellowship**. The unique **fellowship** between God and Jesus began in eternity, was manifested in time through the incarnation of Jesus, was introduced to the apostles, and then introduced to each and every believer through indwelling of the Holy Spirit (2Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1). (Carpenter, Eugene E.; Comfort, Philip W. - Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

To reiterate, **fellowship** in Scripture does not refer to a social gatherings which is what many think of today as "fellowship." **Koinonia** is translated sharing in 1Cor 10:16 and as partnership in 2Cor 6:14 which helps us discern the basic meaning is that of a "joint participation in things held in common." The amazing truth in John's passage is that the fellowship we can have with the Father through the Son is also the same fellowship we, as believers, can have with one another. Although John does not use **koinonia** in his Gospel, he does speak of the believer's oneness and unity, as in Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 - Jesus prays for oneness and unity which is essentially synonymous with fellowship between God and man and men with other men...

And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, **that they may be one**, even as We are (The Father and the Son Jesus Christ). (cp John's phrase "that you also may have fellowship with us and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." (Jn 17:11, 12)

(Jesus prays for believers) **that they may all be one**; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. (Jn 17:21) (**Comment:** Can you see the concept of fellowship in this passage? Remember the root idea is "koinos" meaning having something in common).

And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; **that they may be one, just as We are one**; 23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in **unity**, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. (Jn 17:22, 23) (**Comment:** Note here the high and holy purpose of our oneness with the Father and the Son and each other - that the world may know!)

What is it that John wants to share with his readers? Wuest's paraphrase gives us an answer by explaining so that "you may be participating jointly in common with us (in our first-hand knowledge of the life of our Lord)".

I like **Pastor Chuck Smith's** explanation of John's purpose for sharing this truth about Christ...

That you might have fellowship with us.

1. Jesus Christ removed all of the barriers that held men apart.

a. Racial barriers. "Neither Jew nor Greek."

b. Social barriers. "Bond or free."

c. Sexual barriers. "Male or female."

2. The world in Jesus' day had sharp divisions.

a. Racial divisions. (1) The Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans or any other race. (2) To the Jew the world was divided between the Jew and the Gentile dog. (3) The Jew would not think of eating with a Gentile. (4) They felt that only a Jew could be saved thus the Gentiles were created by God only to fuel the fires of hell. (5) Jesus changed all of this.

Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us];

Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace;

Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

b. Social divisions. He came to a world which a large percentage of the people were slaves. (1) Slaves were considered as animals. They were the property of their masters who could use them or abuse them any way they pleased. (2) They were bought and sold, had no rights of their own.

c. Sexual divisions. (1) The women in the time of Christ were only one step above a slave. (2) No rights of education or self determination. Their fathers would sell them to the prospective groom. (3) The Greeks said that every man should have a courtesan for companionship, a concubine for sexual gratification, and a wife to bear his legitimate children.

3. Jesus came to change all of this.

a. Every person is of inestimable value to Jesus. (1) The poor as well as the rich. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" (2) The Aborigine as well as much as the cosmopolitan. (3) The women as well as the men. b. He has put us all on one plain (Ed: "The foot of the Cross.").

J Ligon Duncan describes the **fellowship** as...

between brothers and sisters in Christ in which we share life, we are mutually committed, we are mutually accountable, we believe that same truth, we are committed to the same mission, we are in love with the same Lord, we are trusting the same God, we are proclaiming the same gospel....Notice when he says that "you may fellowship with us," the stress is not on having fellowship with one another, but it is having fellowship with the apostles, so that you may have fellowship with us. The only way that you can have fellowship in the Church is to believe what the apostles have taught about Jesus Christ. And he's saying that when you embrace these things, you have fellowship with us. When you believe what we have taught about Jesus Christ, then you have fellowship with us and you are part of the body of Christ, the people of God, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John Stott explains that the believer's **fellowship** is

that common participation in the grace of God, the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit which is the spiritual birthright of all Christian believers. It is their common possession of life -- one with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which makes them one.

William Dyer alluded to fellowship with one another when he offered this advice for believers...

Be much with those who are much with God. Walk with those who walk with God

FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

Steven Cole has an excellent exposition on three points about fellowship with one another...

(1) Fellowship with one another not based on fellowship with God is not true Christian fellowship.

Although unbelievers who come in among us should be able to sense the love, they cannot know true fellowship with other believers until they personally come to faith in Jesus Christ and begin to walk with Him on a daily basis. In other words, knowing Christ personally and growing in that relationship is the basis for any true fellowship with others that know Christ. It is Christ Himself that we share in common. True Christian fellowship is when we share together about the riches of Christ and the treasures of His Word. Anything less is not genuine fellowship.

J. Vernon McGee once spoke at a Rotary Club meeting, where a banner read, "Food, Fun, Fellowship." He said that the food was nothing to brag about—embalmed chicken and peas. The fun was a few corny jokes. The fellowship consisted of one man patting the other on the back and saying, "Hi, Bill, how's business?" Or, "how's the wife?" That was their idea of fellowship McGee goes on to say that what is called "Christian" fellowship often isn't much different. We get together for a potluck sup-per and talk about everything under the sun, except that which would provide true fellowship, namely, all that we share together in Christ. True Christian fellowship centers on fellowship with God.

Fellowship with one another based on true fellowship with God is the core of true Christian unity. John did not

advocate “fellowship” with the heretics. These men, no doubt, still claimed to believe in Jesus, but just not in the same way that the apostles understood things. Even though John emphasizes love, he never encourages love and fellowship with these heretics. Quite the opposite, he makes it clear that we should not welcome them even with a warm greeting. To do so would be to participate in their evil deeds (2 John 10, 11).

There is a lot of sloppy thinking in Christian circles about the subject of unity in Christ. Clearly, it is an important topic. Jesus prayed that His followers would be one, so that the world would know that the Father sent Him (John 17:23). Those trying to pro-mote unity often say, “The world will know that we follow Jesus by our love, not by our doctrine.” So they say, “Let’s come together in areas where we agree, and set aside the matters where we disagree.”...

True Christian unity must be based on true fellowship with God, which must be based on faith in the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone.

In Ephesians 4, Paul mentions two kinds of unity. He says (Ep 4:3) that we should be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The unity of the Spirit already exists; it must be preserved. But he goes on to say (Eph 4:12) that the pastor-teachers are to equip the saints, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God...” (Ep 4:13). The unity of the faith does not yet exist. We attain to it as we grow to know Jesus Christ better through the study and teaching of the Word.

(2) True fellowship with God is based on the truth that God has revealed about His Son (1Jn 1:3)...Fellowship not based on the revealed truth about Jesus Christ is not true fellowship. Often those who try to promote Christian unity will say, “Doctrine divides. We should set aside our doctrines and just love one another.” John would say, “Nonsense!” Sound doctrine unites, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:13. True fellowship centers on the truth of the apostolic testimony about Jesus Christ. If we depart from that, we have left the biblical foundation for unity. This is why we cannot have true fellowship with liberals, who deny the deity of Jesus Christ. What do we share in common? Nothing!

Fellowship with God exists only through the blood of His Son....Without new life, there cannot be any fellowship.....

If you have experienced new life in Christ, then the Father lovingly cares for every aspect of your life. He has given you all that you need for life and godliness through the promises of His Word (2 Pet. 1:3-4). He encourages you to cast all your cares on Him, knowing that He cares for you (1 Pet. 5:7). He sympathizes with your weaknesses and invites you to come to His throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help in your times of need (Heb. 4:14-16). So you can share every burden, every struggle, and every thought openly with Him and know that He welcomes you!

Such fellowship with God through Christ is not automatic or effortless. Relationships take time and effort. There is no such thing as a good marriage that just happens spontaneously. If you see a good marriage, it’s because the couple makes it a priority to spend time together and to work at being close. They are committed to work through any difficulties or hurt feelings. They work hard at communication and they avoid temptations that would create distance or divide them.

Fellowship with God is no different. You’ve got to work at it, make time for it, and turn away from things that would create distance between you and God. Of course, sin hinders fellowship, but so do other things. The enemy will try to get you to anything except spend time alone with God. It may be TV, the newspaper, work, hobbies, or time with your friends. But if you allow these things to crowd out consistent time in God’s Word and in prayer, you will not grow close to God in genuine fellowship.

As you grow in fellowship with God, you will find that increasingly, His purposes and desires become your purposes and desires. If His purpose is to be glorified by saving some from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:9), then you will find great joy when you hear news of the gospel advancing around the world. If you don’t care about missions and you yawn when you hear of someone coming to Christ, but you hear of the score of a sports event and come alive with excitement, you may want to examine whether you enjoy true fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

(3) True fellowship with one another and with God is the source of true joy. As we saw last time, the original text (1Jn 1:4) probably read “**our joy**,” not “your joy.” But both are true. When a sinner comes to Christ, it brings great joy to those who already know Christ, but it also brings great joy to the sinner who is saved. And as our fellowship with God and with one another deepens, the joy deepens. In commenting on the fact that God has given us eternal life, Calvin exclaims (ibid., p. 157), “But if we consider how miserable and horrible a condition

death is, and also what is the kingdom and the glory of immortality, we shall perceive that there is something here more magnificent than what can be expressed in any words.” (Ed: See Findlay’s note below for an eloquent attempt to express this great truth in words.)

"A GREAT SECRET" A NEW DIVINE FELLOWSHIP FOR MEN

George G Findlay writes...

there is founded upon the facts thus attested (John’s firsthand experience of hearing, seeing, touching the Living Lord Jesus), there is derived from the **eternal life** revealed in Christ, A NEW DIVINE FELLOWSHIP FOR MEN. To promote this end John writes:

“That you also may have fellowship with us.”

To communicate these truths, to see this fellowship established and perfected amongst men, is the apostle’s one delight, the business and delight of all those who share his faith and serve his Master:

“These things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled.”

We have a great secret in common, we and the apostles. The Father told it to Jesus, Jesus to them, they to us, and we to others. Those who have seen and heard such things, cannot keep the knowledge to themselves. These truths belong not to us only, but to **“the whole world”** (1John 2:2); they concern every man who has a soul to save, who has sins to confess and death to meet, who has work to do for his Maker in this world, and a way to find for himself through its darkness and perils.

The Apostle John is writing to Greeks, to men far removed from him in native sympathy and instinct; but he has long since forgotten all that, and the difference between **Jew** and **Greek** never once crosses his mind in writing his letter. He has risen above it, and left it behind through his **fellowship with Christ**. (cp Col 3:11-note) The only difference he knows is that existing between men who **“are of God”** (1Jn 4:1, 4, 6, 5:19) and men who **“are of the world.”** (1Jn 4:5) In John the idea of the Church catholic (universal or general church, not a denomination in this context) as a **spiritual brotherhood** is perfected.

But our fellowship is not only with prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints of God. We do not hold with the apostle merely such fellowship as we have with other great minds of the past; nor was John’s communion with his Lord that which we cherish with our beloved dead, the communion of memory, or at best of hope.

If the facts the apostles test are true, they are true for us as for them. If the life manifested in the Lord Jesus was eternal, then it is living and real today.

As it **“was from the beginning,”** it will be to the end. Jesus Christ had brought His disciples into spiritual union and fellowship with the living God. He had shown them the Father. He had made them individually children of God, with Himself for elder brother. He had passed away from their sight, to be with them forever in His Spirit (Jn 14:16). In this way He had really come to them, and the Father with Him, when He seemed to be going (John 14:18-23).

They felt themselves to be in direct communion and communication, every day they lived, with the Almighty Father in heaven, and with His Son Jesus Christ whom they had known and loved on earth. To this fellowship they invite and summon all mankind. (Ed: Beloved you may want to read this section again! To me it is almost beyond my comprehension what Findlay has just said, but I believe that is what the apostle John wants to communicate to our hearts even more than our heads!)

The manifestation of God in Christ makes fellowship with God possible in an altogether new and richer way. Does not the very distinction revealed in the Godhead render such communion accessible, as it could not be otherwise to human thought?

“Our communion,” writes John, **“is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ”** — with each distinctly, with each in and through and for the Other. We have fellowship with Christ in the Father. He has explained the Father (John 1:18), and talked to us about Him; and we are entering into His views. We share Christ’s thoughts about God.

On the other hand, we have fellowship with God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is God’s; but He is ours as well! God has told us what He thinks about His Son, and wishes us to think with Him. Showing Him to the

world, He says: "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am ever well pleased." (Mt 3:17, 17:5, Mk 9:7, 35, 2Pe 1:17) And we agree to that: we are well pleased with Him too! We solemnly accept the testimony of God concerning His Son. Then we are at one with God in respect to Christ. And all harmony and peace centre there. "The Father Himself loveth you," said Jesus to His disciples, "because you have loved Me, and believed that I came out from the Father." In Him God is reconciling the world to Himself. Only when we think aright of Christ, and are rightly disposed toward Him, can we have fellowship with each other, and work together with God for the world's redemption. ([Biblical Illustrator - 1John 1 = more than 70 pages of resources](#)) (The **Biblical Illustrator** extracted this section from Findlay's commentary - [1 John - An Exposition of the Epistles of St John](#))

C H Spurgeon has a thought that may surprise you, explaining that...

THE twelve apostles were favored with the most intimate intercourse with our blessed Lord; but I can hardly say that they entered into **fellowship** with Him during His life on earth. Each of them might have been asked the question that our Savior put to one of them: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" (Jn 14:9) But after Christ had ascended to heaven, and the Spirit of God had rested upon His disciples, and in proportion as the Spirit did rest upon them, all that they had seen, and heard, and handled of their Lord became a means of communion between Himself and them. They were then able to realize what a very near, and dear, and deep, and familiar communion had been possible to them through having spent some three years or so with Him in public and in private, and having actually seen Him, and heard His voice, and felt the touch of His hand.

Now, since their literal hearing, seeing, and touching Christ did not create communion with Him apart from the work of the Spirit, we need not so much regret, as we might otherwise have done, that we never saw, or heard, or touched the Savior, because we also, without seeing, or hearing, or touching Him, can believe in Him, and rejoice that He said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (Jn 20:29KJV)

And, further, as it is through faith, rather than by sight (2Cor 5:7-note), or hearing, or feeling, that the Spirit of God operates upon us, when we believe the witness of the apostles concerning Christ, the Spirit of God will bless their message to us, and we shall enter into the apostles' fellowship.

What the apostles learnt, they learnt in order that they might tell it to others. All that John saw, he was prepared to speak of according to his ability, that others might have fellowship with him; and, dear friends, remember that, if you ever learn anything of Christ, — if you have any enjoyment of His presence at any time, — it is not for yourself alone, but for others also to share with you. When fellowship is the sweetest, your desire is the strongest that others may have fellowship with you; and when, truly, your fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, you earnestly wish that the whole Christian brotherhood may share the blessing with you. My great desire, just now, is not so much to preach to you as to lead you, by the Holy Spirit's gracious assistance, into the actual enjoyment of that which the apostles possessed, that, believing, as we do, their testimony, we might thereby enter into their fellowship. (**Read Spurgeon's entire message - Fellowship with the Father and the Son**)

Roy Cook wrote about fellowship alluding to a famous quotation...

"No man is an island." said poet John Donne. I believe every man is an island, but there are no limits to the bridges or harbors one can build. (cp Gal 3:28, 29) (**Ed:** Cook is referring of course to "bridges" of fellowship with other believers.)

William James had an interesting quote stating that...

Whenever two people meet there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is.

Comment: Perhaps James is correct, but for believers he is incorrect, for when two believers meet, the Triune God in the form of the indwelling Spirit is present in both. I would also say the likelihood is also increased that there is one less man. In other words for believers "each man as he sees himself" should be equivalent to "each man as he really is". If not one or both are being hypocritical! It is difficult for hypocritical believers to have genuine experiential fellowship. Perhaps this is why John goes on in 1Jn 1:7 to emphasize the importance of believers walking in the light. Then they can enjoy genuine fellowship with the Father, the Son, the Spirit and each other. **May that be our desire and our daily prayer and practice as followers of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Vance Havner on fellowship...

We have fellowship...(1John 1:3, 7).

Precious indeed is the fellowship of those whose citizenship is in heaven.

1. We have fellowship with the Saviour: "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:9).
2. We have the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1).
3. There is the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).
4. We enjoy the fellowship of the saints (1 John 1:7; Acts 2:42).
5. There is the fellowship of service; "the fellowship of ministering to the saints" (2 Cor. 8:4).

But there is also a fellowship of Satan: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

We cannot have a heavenly fellowship if we allow a hindering fellowship. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

H G Bosch gives a touching illustration of fellowship as the "sharing of hearts" - In 1765 John Fawcett was called to pastor a very small congregation at Wainsgate, England. He labored there diligently for 7 years, but his salary was so meager that he and his wife could scarcely obtain the necessities of life. Though the people were poor, they compensated for this lack by their faithfulness and warm fellowship. Then Dr. Fawcett received a call from a much larger church in London, and after lengthy consideration decided to accept the invitation. As his few possessions were being placed in a wagon for moving, many of his parishioners came to say good-bye. Once again they pleaded with him to reconsider. Touched by this great outpouring of love, he and his wife began to weep. Finally Mrs. Fawcett exclaimed, "O John, I just can't bear this. They need us so badly here." "God has spoken to my heart, too!" he said. "Tell them to unload the wagon! We cannot break these wonderful ties of fellowship." This experience inspired Fawcett to write a hymn. "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love! The fellowship of kindred mind is like to that above." (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times)

How Important is Fellowship - During World War II, the enemy conducted experiments to find the most effective type of punishment for eliciting information from prisoners. They found that solitary confinement was the most effective. After a few days of solitary confinement, most men would tell all.

That is why we need fellowship—without it we too become easy prey for temptation and abandonment of our values. Although this illustration describes the need of humanity in general, we can easily relate this truth to the need of Christian's sharing their lives with one another. (Adapted from Michael Green)

People or Things? - After many months of waiting, a Russian girl finally obtained a visa to visit her relatives in Canada for three months. She arrived in Canada and was shown around the various attractions, amusements, and entertainments. The young Russian seemed immensely impressed by the amount of things that people were wrapped up with. As the three months drew to a close, everyone expected her to defect and seek political asylum in Canada. She surprised them all by expressing a desire to return to her family in Russia and the small group of believers to which they belonged. She explained that in North America everyone seems wrapped up in "things" and doesn't have time for people. In Russia, they don't have as many material possessions and consequently they need each other. She wanted to return to a place where people relied on each other, where fellowship was important. (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Baker Book House)

AND INDEED OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER, AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST: kai e koinonia de e emetera meta tou patros kai meta tou huiou autou Iesou Christou.:

- **fellowship:** 1Jn 1:7 2:23,24 Jn 14:20-23 17:3,11,21 1Co 1:9,30 2Co 13:14 Php 2:1 3:10 Heb 3:14
- **with His Son:** 1Jn 5:10,11 Col 1:13 1Th 1:10
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

**BROTHERHOOD CAN ONLY BE
THROUGH FATHERHOOD**

AND SONSHIP

J M Gibbon writes...

Union is union with God. Cicero has said that there can be no friendship but between good men. Bad men may combine, but cannot unite. Their combination is a rope of sand. God only unites. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." The hope of the world lies not in agitation, nor in revolution, nor in reformation, but in regeneration. ([1 John 1- Biblical Illustrator](#))

As **Findlay** stated above...

Jesus Christ had brought His disciples into spiritual union and fellowship with the living God.

Ray Stedman comments that...

We shall discover, as we go on as Christians, that the horizontal relationship is directly related to the vertical one. If the vertical is not right, the horizontal one will be wrong, and, if it is wrong, it is because something is wrong between us and the Father. If we want to straighten out the horizontal relationship, that of getting along with our fellow Christians and fellow men, we must be sure that the vertical one is straight. Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. ([1 John 1:1-4: Life With Father](#))

Our ([emeteros](#)) is the possessive pronoun of the first person. You are probably asking "So what?"

Hiebert explains that this pronoun...

is a strong one; it is not the genitive of the personal pronoun but rather the first person plural of the possessive pronoun, **emphasizing an actual mutual possession**. This plural may be understood as restricted to the apostles, but it is more natural to hold that John deliberately chose this form to include his readers with him in this further aspect of their fellowship. No verb is used in the Greek, but English versions generally supply "**is**" to denote a positive assertion.

For true believers this Godward fellowship is a fact, though a call to deepen it is always in order.

This vertical fellowship is vital for true fellowship horizontally. Each reflects and influences the other. ([1 John 1:1-4 Exposition](#))

Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ - Note that there is no verb "is" in the Greek but it has been added by the translators. Literally it reads "*our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*" John emphasizes the reason his readers can experience fellowship with each other is because as believers they all have fellowship with the Father and the Son. In other words, the fellowship John and his readers experience is personal communion with the Father and the Son is made possible by the past completed sacrifice and present ongoing mediation of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

**Communion with men
must begin with union with God.**

John Stott makes an interesting observation that...

John does not here mention the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which is a characteristic expression in the Pauline Epistles (2Co 13:14; Phil 2:1), no doubt because the false teachers against whom he is writing make him concentrate on the Son, whom their heresy dishonored, and the Father whom they thereby forfeited.

Fellowship is - Notice John does not say "**was**" but "**is**." In John's experience this fellowship **is** vibrant, real, alive and dynamic, even though Christ had physically departed from this world some 60 years earlier. Fellowship with the Father and the Son transcends time and space, for it is a supernatural fellowship wrought by an unbreakable covenant bond. This fellowship is present experience of sharing in the eternal life of the Father and the Son. It is joint participation in a common life with the Godhead and with fellow Christians. In sum, this sharing in the life of Christ is not a past experience, but a present ongoing lifestyle, which from other Scriptures, will last forever and ever (Amen!)

In **Paul's** first letter to the Corinthians, he alludes to the saints privileged fellowship with God...

God is faithful, by Whom you were called into the **fellowship** of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9)

**EXPERIENCING
GOD**

To have **fellowship with the Father** also includes being a sharer or partaker in the work that the Father is carrying out on earth. **Henry Blackaby** has written a wonderful book entitled [Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God](#) ([click and scroll down to read some of the reviews](#)) and you may want to do this study yourself! I personally can testify this study truly changed my life and approach to ministry!) in which some of his main premises are the truth that the Father is always working around us and the amazing truth that He invites us to join Him in His work (cp "partaker" or "sharer")!

With the Father and with His Son - Note that fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ and that it is only possible in and through Christ. Stated another way apart from Jesus Christ no man can experience fellowship with the Living God. While John does not mention the Holy Spirit at this time, Paul closes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians with this benediction...

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship (koinonia)** of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (2Cor 13:14) (**Ed**: Do we not see an allusion to the Trinity in this passage?)

Vincent calls our attention to...

the repeated preposition **meta** (meaning "**with**"), distinguishing the two persons, and coordinating the fellowship with the Father, and the fellowship with the Son, thus implying sameness of essence. The fellowship with both contemplates both as united in the Godhead.

Hiebert amplifies Vincent's comments...

The true grandeur of this vertical fellowship (God with man) is grounded in the fact that it is **'with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ** (Greek literally reads "**with the Son His**"). The repetition of both the preposition ("with" = meta) and the definite article ("the") emphatically **marks the distinction and equality of the Father and the Son**. Both the **Father** and the **Son** are one in Godhood. The preposition **meta** marks the thought of association between the persons involved in the fellowship. Dammers remarks that the thought is of "**communion with God**, not absorption in Him; a vital distinction to make in Hindu and Buddhist lands today as it was in John's Hellenistic world." ([1 John 1:1-4 Exposition](#))

Kruse writes that...

Christian fellowship is primarily a fellowship with God the **Father** through **Jesus Christ his Son**. The priority of the **Father** in this statement reflects the Johannine understanding of things. In the Fourth Gospel even eternal life is defined in similar terms: 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent' (John 17:3). ([The Letters of John - Pillar New Testament Commentary by Colin G. Kruse, D. A. Eerdmans Publishing](#))

Lenski has an interesting insight asking...

Why does John not say at once "that you, too, may be having fellowship with the Father and his Son"? Why does he insert the apostles and say with whom their fellowship is to be enjoyed? Because of the antichrists, Cerinthus and his separatist following. In the first advanced circle of thought (1Jn 1:5-10), in 1Jn 1:6, 7 the true fellowship is set over against the false claim of fellowship with God. Cerinthus repudiated the testimony of the apostles regarding the Logos and the efficacy of His blood and thus scorned fellowship with John and with any of the apostles. Cerinthus claimed fellowship with God without the cleansing blood of Jesus, in his estimation only a man (Not the God-Man) died on the cross. That is why John introduces the fellowship already here....

Throughout the past centuries even as today those who reject the testimony of the apostles have no fellowship with them, have no fellowship with the Father and with his Son, who is none other than Jesus Christ. Although they may preach God and fellowship with God as much as they please they are antichrists (4:3) and deny the Father as well as the Son. "Everyone denying the Son, neither has the Father" (2:23), may he claim what he will. "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God" (4:15), which alone is fellowship with God. All this is basic for the entire epistle and thus appears in John's basic statement (v. 1-4).

His Son (literally "the Son His") - This phrase identifies the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

Burdick notes that John's designation "**His Son Jesus Christ**"

leaves no room for any kind of Gnostic distinction between the divine Son and the human Jesus.

Puritan Thomas Watson had the following advice regarding the redeeming the time (Eph 5:16-note)...

Improve this short time by keeping up a **close communion with God**. **1John 1:3**: "Our communion is with the

Father." This sweet communion with God is kept up by holy meditation. Genesis 24:63: "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening." Meditation cements divine truths into the mind. It brings God and the soul together. **Meditation** is the bellows of the affections. It gives a sight and a taste of invisible glory. Psalm 104:34: "My meditation of Him shall be sweet." **Communion with God is kept up by prayer.** Praying days are ascension days. Caligula placed his effigies in the capitol, whispering in Jupiter's ears. Prayer whispers in God's ears. It is a secret parley and conversation with God. On this mount of prayer, the soul has many sweet transfigurations. ([Time's Shortness - A sermon preached July 2, 1676, at the funeral of Pastor John Wells](#))

Puritan Thomas Brooks commenting on the source of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ writes...

that union which is between the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the subject and the prince, the body and the soul—are not so close a union as that which is between a believer and God. ([Ark8](#))

J C Philpot adds that...

From this spiritual union with the Lord flows COMMUNION or fellowship with him...From this communion flows FRUITFULNESS, as the Lord so beautifully opens up in the parable of the vine and the branches. How plainly he there declares that "without him," that is, without union and communion with him, we can "do nothing," that is, bring forth no fruit to his praise; but that, if we "abide in him" by faith and love, and he "abides in us" by his Spirit and grace, fruit will be abundantly brought forth to the glory of God. (John 15:4-8.) ([Jesus the Enthroned King](#))

Thomas Boston emphasizes the necessity of regeneration in order to experience fellowship with God...

Without regeneration there is no communion (fellowship) with God. There is a society on earth, whose "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John 1:3. But out of that society, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as you heard before at large. Now, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. They are all unholy: and "what communion has light with darkness – Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. 6:14, 15. They may have a show and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness, and therefore "without God in the world." How sad is it, to be employed in religious duties—yet to have no fellowship with God in them! You would not be content with your food, unless it nourished you; nor with your clothes, unless they kept you warm: and how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while you have no communion with God in them? ([Human Nature in its Fourfold State](#))

Son ([5207](#)) (**huios**) - Huios is used by John only of Jesus. Even though he refers to believers as **children** (**teknon** or **teknon**) of God, John never uses **huios** of believers and thus he makes a fundamental distinction between Jesus as the **Son of God** and believers as the **children of God** (1Jn 3:1, 3:2, 10, 5:2). "**Son**" is clearly a key word in this letter for John uses it in every chapter, for a total of 22x in 18v - 1 John 1:3, 7; 2:22, 23 (2x), 1Jn 2:24; 3:8, 23; 4:9, 10, 14, 15; 5:5, 9, 10 (2x), 1Jn 5:11, 12 (2x), 1Jn 5:13, 20 (2x). Note that John uses "Son" seven times in the phrase "Son of God" (1Jn 3:8, 4:15, 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20).

Kistemaker comments on John's use of **Son** as

emphasizes the basic confession of the church: "Jesus is the Son of God." Throughout his epistle he mentions the fellowship of the believer with the Father and the Son (1Jn 1:7), the redeeming work of the Son (1Jn 1:7; 4:10), the mission of the Son (1Jn 3:8), God's testimony about the Son (1Jn 5:9), the gift of the Son in terms of eternal life (1Jn 5:11, 13), and last, the coming of the Son (1Jn 5:20). ([Simon J. Kistemaker: New Testament Commentary - James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude](#))

Jesus Christ - John uses this full title 6 times, at least once in every chapter - 1 John 1:3, 2:1, 3:23, 4:2, 5:6, 5:20. The Name **Jesus** (means "Jehovah is salvation" cp Mt 1:21) emphasizes His humanity, while **Christ** emphasizes His deity. Indeed John's goal in manifold ways is that his readers know that the human **Jesus** is also the heavenly, divine **Messiah**, the **Christ** ("The Anointed One"). Recall that John is confronting false teaching that taught Jesus was only a man, which of course means that His death had no efficacy in atoning for sin, for His blood was only a man's blood. Keep in mind that the focal point of almost every cult is some foundational aspect of the Person and/or work of Jesus Christ, with the result that they teach "another Jesus" which results in damnation for all who believe in this "Jesus." (cp Paul's denunciation of "another Gospel" Gal 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 2Co 11:4) John is determined that his readers know the real Jesus Christ as the Son of God, for only in and through Him is their salvation assured. Note that in this epistle, John also has two uses of **Jesus** and **Christ** in the form of a "*confession*" (1Jn 2:22, 1Jn 5:1).

David Guzik amplifies the truth of a shared life **with the Father and His Son** writing that...

The kind of relationship John described is only possible because Jesus is who John says He is in 1John 1:1-2.

If someone invited you to have a “personal relationship” with Napoleon, or Alexander the Great, or Abraham Lincoln - or even Moses or the Apostle Paul - we would think them foolish. One cannot even have a genuine “spiritual” relationship with a dead man. But with the eternal God who became man, we can have a relationship. The word **fellowship** has in it not only the idea of relationship, but of **sharing a common life**.

**When we have fellowship with Jesus,
we will become more like Him.**

The disciples did not have the close fellowship with Jesus when He walked this earth with them. As Jesus said to Philip at the very end of His earthly ministry, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?" (John 14:9) Their **true fellowship** was not created by material closeness to the material Jesus, but by a **work of the Holy Spirit** after the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Therefore we can enter into the same fellowship with God that the Apostles could enter.

We have the potential of a relationship of a shared life with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. It is as if the Father and the Son agree together to let us into their relationship of love and fellowship. This idea of a shared life is essential. This doesn't mean that when Jesus comes into our life He helps us to do better what we did before. We don't add Jesus to our life. We enter into a relationship of a shared life with Jesus. We share our life with Him, and He shares His life with us.

Jerry Bridges writes about "Communion with God" in his excellent book "Bookends of the Christian Life"...

This fellowship is both objective and subjective in nature. Objectively, it's an unbreakable union with Christ. In this sense, every believer has fellowship with him at all times. This objective aspect is undoubtedly what Paul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 1:9. In addition, God intends for us to experience and enjoy this fellowship with him as we consciously spend time in his presence. This subjective aspect of fellowship is likely what John had in mind in 1 John 1:3. And this is the type of fellowship we refer to as communion. Communion is the experience of our union. One illustration of this is the marriage relationship. When we marry someone, there's an objective aspect to it—a legal union is formed the moment we say “I do.” That's our status, even when we're apart or feel emotionally distant. But subjectively, we can experience a close and warm relationship as we spend time enjoying one another.

Desire for communion with God is vividly described in the Psalms. “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1). And: “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1–2). This concept of communion may be easy enough to see and understand intellectually, but we need more than intellectual assent and understanding; we need application. We need this truth to become our daily practice and our heart's desire. For that to happen, we are dependent on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as we work diligently at the spiritual disciplines. It is with this in mind that we offer the next chapter. ([The Bookends of the Christian Life](#))

TRUE CHRISTIANITY ROOTED IN REVELATION REALIZED IN RELATIONSHIP

Steven Cole draws a practical application from this passage noting that...

true Christianity is an experience rooted in revelation and realized in relationship—with God and with other believers. This two-dimensional fellowship should always be deepening in both directions. If you've been a Christian for a while, you should know and enjoy fellowship with God better than before. And, you should be deepening your relationships with God's people. This is to say that unless you are in solitary confinement, you cannot be a growing Christian in isolation from other Christians. True Christianity is an experience of fellowship with God and with His people. ([1 John 1:1-3 The Tests of True Christianity](#))

Ray Stedman comments that in this passage John teaches us...

the most remarkable thing about Christian life, **communion**, or **fellowship** with Christ. It really takes two English words to bring out what this really means.

FELLOWSHIP IS... PARTNERSHIP

There is, first of all, a **partnership**, i.e., the sharing of mutual interests, mutual resources, mutual labor

together. God and I, working together, a partnership. All that I have is put at his disposal. Well, what do I have? I have me. I have my mind, my body. True, these are gifts of God, but they are put at my disposal to do with as I please. That is what I have, and now I put them at his disposal. When I do I discover something most remarkable. Everything that He is, is put at my disposal. Is that not marvelous? The greatness of God, the wisdom, the power, the glory of His might -- all is made available to me, when I make myself available to Him.

This is the great secret of fellowship.

This means that he makes available to me that which I desperately lack, wisdom and power, the ability to do. There are things I know I want to do, things I would like to do because it is His will, what He wants. But I can only do them as I make myself available to Him, depending upon Him to come through from His side, making Himself available to me. Then I discover that I can do what I want to do. That is what Paul says: "I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me," (Philippians 4:13-note).

FELLOWSHIP IS... FRIENDSHIP

But it is not only partnership, there is also **friendship**. Friendship and partnership together spell fellowship. Have you ever thought of this, that God desires you to be His friend? What do you do with a friend? You tell Him secrets. That is what friends are for. You tell them intimate things, secrets. And God wants to tell us secrets. Jesus said to His disciples, "I have not called you servants, but I have called you friends," (John 15:15) (**Ed:** As an aside "**friend**" is a covenant term which speaks of "oneness"**See explanation**). He said this in a context in which He was attempting to impart to them the secrets of life. Now God will do this...He wants to do it. This is what that wonderful word, fellowship, means. But it will be as you are able to bear these secrets. As you grow along with Him you will discover that your eyes are continually being opened to things you never saw before. God will tell you secrets about yourself, about life, about others around you, about everything, imparting these to you because that is part of fellowship. That is what we are called to. The fellowship is based upon the relationship. You cannot have the fellowship until you first come to Christ and receive Him. When you have the Son you are related to the Father, and when you are related to Him, you can have fellowship with Him. ([1 John 1:1-4: Life With Father](#))

Lightner rightly states...

This is a stunning claim. The author of the epistle is stating that he is a part of a circle so intimate with God that if one has fellowship with his circle, one has fellowship with God the Father and with His Son.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD... TO HAVE COMMUNION WE MUST HAVE COMMUNICATION

Spurgeon gives an illustration of fellowship with God and then discusses the relationship of fellowship and prayer...

Let me give you an illustration to show you what fellowship is. Yet, while I use it, I regret that it falls so far short of the truth I wish to illustrate, yet I know not of a better one. Suppose that a great plague raged in London, like that which carried off so many of the population in years gone by; and suppose that there lived, in this city, a father and a son, whose one care was for the healing of others. Suppose you lived in the same house as they lived in, and that you saw the intimate affection existing between them, and that you were in their council-chamber when they consulted together as to what was to be done for the perishing citizens. You marked the resolve of the son to make a sacrifice of himself, from day to day, by going into the homes of those who were smitten with the plague. You observed him as, with his father's smile resting upon him, he went forth to his work. You were privileged to live in the house while the work of rescue was going on, and you saw how the sick ones were being plucked from the grip of the terrible disease, like brands from the burning. You watched the father's love, and the son's self-sacrifice, and you were filled with admiration of them....

Well, suppose we are living in such a house as I have tried to describe to you, the first thing necessary for fellowship with such a father, and such a son, would be mutual communication. To live in the house where they were, yet never to speak to them, or to be spoken to by them, would be no sort of fellowship. Merely to know that there were such persons in the house, and to know that they were engaged in such blessed work as that, would not make us **partakers** with them, and would not give us **communion** with them. We must speak to them, and they must speak to us; and the speaking, on both sides, must be of a kind, loving sort; — not, on

our part, that which would offend them; nor, on their part, that which would imply anger towards us. That is the very beginning of our **fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ**

There must be mutual communication between us.

We must have heard the voice of God in our hearts, and we must have spoken to God from our hearts. You cannot enjoy this fellowship, my friend, whatever you say, unless your soul has learned to speak with God in prayer and praise, and unless your ear has learned to listen to whatever He says to you through His Book, and by His Spirit, through His ministers, and in creation and providence. His voice is sounding everywhere; and, in order to fellowship with Him, **you must have the ear that hears, and the heart that believes what He says to you; and you must also have a tongue that responds to His voice, for there can be no true communion without mutual communication.** Do you not perceive the kinship of the two words, **communion** and **communication, communion** and **converse**? This there must be, or there will be no true fellowship. **(Read the entire sermon - Fellowship with the Father and the Son)**

Comment: Spurgeon's words beg the question - **How is our prayer life?** (Mine is not that what it should be!) **Would this truth that the depth of our fellowship with God hinges at least in part on our communication with Him motivate us to speak with Him more freely and more often? May we learn to converse with Him in times that are not "classic prayer mode"...like riding a bicycle, walking around the park, driving to and from work, etc, etc? May God's Spirit take this truth and transform our times of communicating with Himself into times of rich communion for the sake of His Name. Amen.**

In the previous passage (1Jn 1:2) John's statement that the **"Eternal Life...was with the Father"** implies fellowship. The word for **"with"** in that verse is the preposition *"pros"* which **Wuest** explains "means *"facing"* and implies **fellowship**. All of which means that the life ("the Eternal Life") here referred to is a Person, for it requires a person to have **fellowship**. A mere abstraction can have no **fellowship**. The life here is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself Who is said by John to have been in fellowship with the Father."

In his classic commentary on First John **Robert Candlish** writes (albeit sometimes a bit difficult to grasp, necessitating reading very slowly-you may want to bypass his note)...

The object of this fellowship is the Father and the Son. I say the object, for there is but one. No doubt the Father and the Son may be considered separately, as two distinct persons with whom you may have fellowship. And in some views and for some ends it may be quite warrantable, and even necessary, to distinguish the fellowship which you have with the Father from that which you have with his Son Jesus Christ. As Christ is the way, the true and living way, to the Father, so fellowship with Him as such must evidently be preparatory to fellowship with the Father. But it is not thus that Christ is here represented. He is not put before the Father as the way to the Father, fellowship with Whom is the means, leading to fellowship with the Father as the end. He is associated with the Father. Together, in Their mutual relation to One Another and Their mutual mind or heart to One Another, They constitute the one object of this fellowship. The **Father and His Son Jesus Christ**; not Each apart, but the Two—both of Them—together; with whatever the Spirit of the Father and the Son may be commissioned to show, and your spirits may be enabled to take in, of the counsel of peace that is between Them both; that is what is presented to you as the object of your fellowship.

It is a great idea. Who can grasp it?

A Father and a Son among men; both of Them wise, upright, holy, loving; of one mind and heart; perfectly understanding one another; perfectly open to One Another; perfectly confiding in One Another; together bent upon some one great and good undertaking; engrossed thoroughly in some one grand pursuit, characterized by consummate genius and rare benevolence;—that might be an impressive, an attractive picture. To be allowed to make acquaintance with Them in Their Own dwelling where They are at home Together; to be admitted into Their study where They consult together; to watch the Father's face when the Son goes out on any errand or for any work agreed upon between Them; to witness the embrace awaiting Him on His return; to go with the Son, as, through ignominy, and suffering, and toil, and blood, and loathsome contact with filth and crime, He makes His way to yonder outcast, and see how it is His Father's pity for that outcast that is ever uppermost in His thoughts, how it is His Father that He would have to get the praise of every kind word spoken and every sore wound healed; to sit beside the Father and observe with what thrilling interest His whole soul is thrown into what His Son is doing; and when They come to talk it all over Together, when Their glistening eyes meet, and Their bosoms bound to one another, to be there to see;—**that were a privilege**

worth living for, worth dying for. Such as that, only in an infinitely enhanced measure of grace and glory, is the object presented to you for your fellowship. For the illustration so fails as to be almost indecorous.

The Eternal Father and the Eternal Son; what the Father is to the Son and the Son to the Father from everlasting; the Father's purpose in eternity to glorify the Son as Heir of all things; the Son's consent in eternity to be the Lamb slain; the Covenant of electing love securing the fulfillment of the Father's decree and the Son's satisfaction in the seeing of His seed;—then, the amazing concert of that creation-week when the Son, as the Eternal Wisdom, was with the Father, being "daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, his delights being with the children of men;"—then, the Son's manifold ministrations as the Angel of the Covenant (Mal 3:1 where "Messenger" = "Angel") on the Father's behalf among these children of men from age to age till His coming in the flesh;—and then, still further—more signal sight still—what the Father and His Son Jesus Christ are to One Another, how They feel toward One Another, what is the amazing unity between Them, all through the deep humiliation of the manger, the wilderness, the synagogues and sea of Galilee, the streets and temple of Jerusalem, the garden and the cross;—what, finally, is that sitting of the Son at the Father's right hand which is now (Heb 12:2-note), and that coming of the Son in His own glory (Mt 24:30 Mk 13:26, 16:27) and the Father's which is to be shortly;—**such is the object of "the apostles' fellowship" and yours. It is fellowship "with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ."**

FELLOWSHIP...TRULY KNOWN ONLY BY EXPERIENCE

2. The nature of the fellowship can be truly known only by experience. In so far as it can be described, in its conditions, its practical working, and its effects, it is brought out in the whole teaching of this epistle, of which it may be said to be the theme. But a few particulars may here be indicated:—

(1.) That it implies intelligence and insight I need scarcely repeat; such intelligence and insight as the Spirit alone can give. No man naturally has it; no man naturally cares to have it. You may tell me, in my natural state, of tangible benefits of some sort coming to me, through some arrangement between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, of which somehow I get the good. I can understand that, and take some interest in that. The notion of my being let off from suffering the pains of hell, and of indulgence being extended to my faults and failings, in consequence of something that Christ has done and suffered for me, which He pleads on my behalf, and which God is pleased so far to accept as to listen favorably to His pleading,—is a notion intelligible enough, congenial and welcome enough, to my natural mind. But this is very different from my having fellowship in that matter, even as thus put and thus understood, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Even while reckoning with reckless confidence on impunity coming to me in virtue of some transaction between the Father and the Son, I may be profoundly and most stupidly indifferent as to what that transaction really is, and what the Father and the Son are to One Another in it. In such a state of mind there can be no "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

(2.) There must be faith: personal, appropriating, and assured faith; in order that the intelligence, the insight, may be quickened by a vivid sense of real personal interest and concern. There must be faith: not a vague and doubtful reliance on the chance, one might say, of some sort of deliverance turning up at last, through the mediation of the Son with the Father; but faith identifying me with the Son, and shutting me up into the Son, in that very mediation itself. There can be no fellowship without this faith; it is the ground and means of the fellowship; it is, in fact, the fellowship itself in essence;—in germ, embryo, or seed. For if I grasp Christ, or rather if He grasps me, in a close indissoluble union, I am to the Father, in a manner, what He is; and the Father is to me what He is to Him. What passes between the Father and the Son is now to me as if it passed—nay, as really passing—between the Father and me. It has all a personal bearing upon myself; I am personally involved in it.

Is it then a kind of selfishness after all?—selfishness refined and spiritualized, the care of my soul rather than my body, my eternal rather than my temporal wellbeing,—but still the care of myself? Nay, it is the death of self. For, first, even in the urgency of its first almost instinctive and inarticulate cry for safety—"What must I do?"—it springs from such a sight and sense of sin and ruin as carries in it an apprehension of the holy and awful name of God and the just claims of God being paramount over all. Then, secondly, in its saving efficacy, it is a going out of self to God in Christ; an acceptance of God in Christ; an embracing of God in Christ; having in it as little of what is self-regarding and self-seeking as that little child's nestling in its mother's bosom has. And thirdly, as the preparation for the fellowship, or as being itself the fellowship, it is the casting of myself, with ever-increasing cordiality of acquiescence and consent, into that glorious plan of everlasting love, in which I am nothing and Christ is all in all;—of which, when I join the company of all the saved, it will be my joy and

theirs to ascribe all the praise "unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

(3.) This fellowship is of a transforming, conforming, assimilating character. In it you become actually partakers with the Father and the Son in nature (cp 2Pe 1:4) and in counsel. For fellowship is participation; it is partnership. The Father and the Son take you into partnership with Them. Plainly this cannot be, unless you are made "partakers of the divine nature;" unless your nature is getting to be molded into conformity with the nature of the Father and the Son. For this end in part, or chiefly, that "eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested to you" in your human nature, that through His dwelling in you by His Spirit (Ro 8:9-note),—and so being "revealed in you,"—that human nature may become in you what it was when He made it His. Not otherwise can there be community or identity of interest between Him and you; not otherwise than by there being community or identity of nature.

ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS

(4.) It is a fellowship of sympathy. Being of one mind, in this partnership, with the Father and the Son, you are of one heart too. Seeing all things, all persons, and all events, in the light in which the Father and the Son see them, you are affected by them and towards them, as the Father and the Son are (**Ed: Dear fellow follower of Christ, is this thought not a bit overwhelming?**). Judging as They judge, you feel as They feel. You do so with reference to all that you come in contact with; all that concerns, or may concern, that great business in which you are partners or fellows, fellow-wishers and fellow-workers, with the Father and the Son. What the business is you know. It is that of which the child of twelve years spoke to His mother and Joseph, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49KJV, cp Jn 4:34, 5:17,6:38, 8:29, 9:4) In what spirit, and after what manner, the Father and the Son are "about that business," you also know (**See note on "Experiencing God"**). You know how, on the Father's behalf, and as having the Father always going along with Him, the Son went about it all His lifelong on earth.

**The Father and the Son welcome—nay, They solicit—your fellowship, partnership,
co-operation, sympathy, in that business.**

The Spirit is manifesting in you that "eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us," for this very end, that you may enter with us (paraphrasing John) into that business which is the Father's and the Son's, with full sympathy and with all your hearts. It is the business of glorifying the Father. It is the business of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, speaking a word in season to the weary. It is the business of going about to do good. It is the business of seeking and saving the lost. It is the business of laying down life for the brethren."

(5.) The fellowship is one of joy. (1Jn 1:4) Intelligence, faith, conformity of mind, sympathy of heart, all culminate in joy; joy in God; entering into the joy of the Lord (cp Neh 8:10). For there is joy in heaven. And if you, receiving what the apostles declare to you of what they have seen and heard,—receiving that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested to them,—have fellowship with them in their fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; the end of all their writing to you is fulfilled, "that your joy may be full" (1Jn 1:4). Fulness of joy it well may be, if you share the joy of the Father and the Son: truly a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory." (1Pe 1:8KJV-note) Into that joy, as the joy of ineffable complacency (feeling of satisfaction) between the Father and the Son from everlasting to everlasting,—in the counsels of a past eternity, in the present triumphs of grace, in the consummated glory of the eternity that is to come,—you are called to enter; you are to have fellowship in it with the Father and the Son.

Is the thought too vast, indistinct, infinite?

Nay then, in that "eternal life which was with the Father being manifested to you,"—in the Son coming forth from the Father,—you have the joy in which you are to have fellowship with Him and with the Father brought home to you with more of definiteness.

When the earth was prepared for man, and for the acting out of all heaven's purpose of grace to man, "I was," says the Son, "by Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." When He came in the flesh to execute that purpose, once at least in His humiliation it is testified of Him, that He "rejoiced in spirit;"—it was when He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Luke 10:21). Into that joy of holy acquiescence in the wise and holy sovereignty of the Father you can enter. And

you can hear Him and obey Him, when bringing home one and another of the poor wandering sheep He came to seek, He makes his appeal to you as knowing His mind and entering into His heart;—"Rejoice with Me, for I have found that which was lost." Rejoice with Me. Yes! Rejoice with Me, as my Father calls Me to rejoice with Him! "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this our brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." ([1 John 1:3 The Doctrine of Fellowship of the Apostles](#))

Chuck Smith draws some very **practical applications** from this passage observing that...

John begins with a lower level, "Fellowship with us" then raises it to the highest level. "Our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ." Fellowship, communion, oneness with the Eternal God the Creator...is the ultimate purpose for our existence. This was God's basic purpose in creating man. "And Adam heard the voice of God as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day." (cp Ge 3:8)

**Walking and communing with God
in the beauty of His creation,
that is the ultimate experience in life.**

For You have created all things and for your good pleasure they are and were created. (Rev 4:11)

How would you rate your fellowship with God? Casual? Close? Intimate? The closest relationships in life are based on love. We sometimes have business relationships, they can become very strained but we continue them because we cannot afford to break them. Many relationships are based on fear. One terrorizes the other, is a tyrant and holds the relationship together with fear. These can be very strained relationships. God wants a loving relationship with you. He initiated this relationship by His love for you. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. "We love Him because He first loved us."

Can you imagine God wanting to share all of His resources with you? I realize that I have so little to offer this relationship except love. I have nothing that God needs, I can only offer Him what He desires, and that is my love. ([Chuck Smith - 1 John 1:3 Sermon Notes](#))

William Harris comments that...

People who are in **koinōnia** share some reality in common, and this is particularly important to the author of 1 John in the context of the ongoing controversy with the opponents about the importance and implications of the earthly career of Jesus. The author and the recipients of the letter share in common the apostolic (eyewitness) testimony about who Jesus is, a reality not shared (in the opinion of the author of 1 John) with the opponents....In general the term koinōnia in 1 John 1:3, 6, and 7 is used to describe a personal relationship with the author or with God—a relationship the author does not believe the opponents genuinely have. In 1 John 1:3 the secondary nuance of commitment to a common task—the proclamation of the gospel message ("word") of life—may be present as well. ([1 John 1:1-4 The Prologue to 1 John](#))

Wayne Barber explains **fellowship** in this passage this way...

Now think with me. Let's see if we can make it simple. John said, "Hey, guys. We are apostles. Who are we? The apostles. We have told you and what we have said all fits together. None of us contradict the other. We want you to participate in what we know and have said. We want you to have fellowship with us. But guys, you can't have fellowship with us if you are going to sever yourself from what we have said because our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ." The moment I sever myself from what the apostles have given me in the Word of God concerning the Word of Life is the very moment my joy is gone. My privileges are gone, and His presence is no longer here. You must adhere to what this Book says and only what this Book says, or you will never have what you are looking for.

Do you understand what he is saying? He is writing to believers and saying, "Hey, guys, if your fellowship is with Him, then your fellowship will be with us and you will be saying the same thing we say. Not only that, you are going to recognize if somebody says something different from that which we have said."

Look at Acts 2:42. I think it has a bearing on this. "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." There is a hint of a warning here. "Guys, you had better shape up. If you want to have fellowship with us, you had better find your fellowship first with God, the Father and with His Son. Not some apparition, not some ghost, not some imaginary doctrine. You find your fellowship with Him, your koinonia with Him. Once you find it with Him and you have settled on that, you will find yourself fellowshiping with us." (That Our Joy May Be Made Complete)

Barnes elaborates on what it means and what it looks like to have **fellowship...with the Father...**

That is, there was something in common with him (John) and God; something of which he and God partook together, or which they shared. This cannot, of course, mean that his nature was the same as that of God, or that in all things he shared with God, or that in anything he was equal with God; but **it means that he partook, in some respects, of the feelings, the views, the aims, the joys which God has. There was a union in feeling, and affection, and desire, and plan, and this was to him a source of joy. He had an attachment to the same things, loved the same truth, desired the same objects, and was engaged in the same work; and the consciousness of this, and the joy which attended it, was what was meant by fellowship.** 1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 12:14.

The fellowship which Christians have with God relates to the following points:

(1.) Attachment to the same truths, and the same objects; love for the same principles, and the same beings. (Ed: Have you ever met a total stranger who you discovered was a brother or sister in Christ? Did you not experience an immediate sense of a unique, even "mystical" bond with them because of the fellowship wrought by all being in an unbreakable union with Christ through the New Covenant of grace? I am sure you understand what I am talking about. This is surely an aspect of the "fellowship" John desires for the believers reading his first letter).

(2.) The same kind of happiness, though not in the same degree The happiness of God is found in holiness, truth, purity, justice, mercy, benevolence. (Ed: Happiness may not be the best word, for strictly speaking it depends on what "happens"! However, divine happiness is independent of the circumstances. Therefore for believers, such "happiness" is not natural but supernatural! Blessed be the Name of the LORD.) The happiness of the Christian is of the same kind that God has; the same kind that angels have; the same kind that he will himself have in heaven-for the **joy** (better word than "happiness") of heaven is only that which the Christian has now, expanded to the utmost capacity of the soul, and freed from all that now interferes with it, and prolonged to eternity.

(3.) Employment, or co-operation with God. There is a sphere in which God works alone, and in which we can have no co-operation, no fellowship with Him. In the work of creation; in upholding all things; in the government of the universe; in the transmission of light from world to world; in the return of the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, the storms, the tides, the flight of the comet, we can have no joint agency, no co-operation with Him. There God works alone.

But there is also a large sphere in which He admits us graciously to a co-operation with Him, and in which, unless we work, His agency will not be put forth. This is seen when the farmer sows his grain; when the surgeon binds up a wound; when we take the medicine which God has appointed as a means of restoration to health. So in the moral world. In our efforts to save our own souls and the souls of others, God graciously works with us; and unless we work, the object is not accomplished. This co-operation is referred to in such passages as these: "We are laborers together (*sunergoi*) with God," 1Cor 3:9. "The Lord working with them," Mk 16:20. "We then as workers together *with Him*," 2Cor 6:1. "That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth," 3 John 1:8. In all such cases, while the **efficiency is of God**-alike in exciting us to effort, and in crowning the effort with success-it is still true that if our efforts were not put forth, the work would not be done. (Ed: I would qualify this to say that whatever God has sovereignly decreed will come to pass whether we choose to submit to His will and work with Him or not. I think that is what Paul meant when he encouraged us to "redeem the opportunities" Eph 5:16 - The secular adages are true - "Seize the opportunity!" and "Opportunity is fleeting!" God graciously calls us to join Him in His work but He will not force us. In that sense we miss out on an aspect of "fellowship" with Him. See this juxtaposition of our part/God's part in Phil 2:12, Phil 2:13 - we cannot accomplish v12 without God's carrying out v13!)...

(4.) We have fellowship with God by direct communion with Him, in prayer, in meditation, and in the ordinances of religion. Of this all true Christians are sensible, and this constitutes no small part of their peculiar joy. The nature of this, and the happiness resulting from it, is much of the same nature as the communion of friend with friend-of one mind with another kindred mind-that to which we owe no small part of our happiness in this world.

(5.) The Christian will have fellowship with His God and Saviour in the triumphs of the latter day, when the scenes of the judgment shall occur, and when the Redeemer shall appear, that He may be admired and adored by assembled worlds. 2Th 1:10. See also Mt 19:28; Rev 3:21.

And with His Son Jesus Christ. That is, in like manner there is much which we have in common with the Savior-in character, in feeling, in desire, in spirit, in plan. Because we are in covenant (new covenant - see **The Oneness of Covenant**) with Christ, there is a union with Him in these things-and the consciousness of this gives peace and joy. (Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical)

Toon explains that

the fact and experience of Christian fellowship only exists because God the Father through Jesus Christ, the Son, and by/in the Spirit has established in grace a relation (a "new covenant") with humankind. Those who believe the gospel of the resurrection are united in the Spirit through the Son to the Father. The relation leads to the reality of relatedness and thus to an experienced relationship (a "communion") between man and God. And those who are thus "in Christ" (as the apostle Paul often states) are in communion not only with Jesus Christ (and the Father) in the Spirit but also with one another. This relatedness, relationship, and communion is fellowship. ([Ibid](#))

John Montgomery Boice asks...

But why is this done? Why this enormous effort, beginning in eternity past, prepared for in the Old Testament writings, focused in Christ, seen by the apostles, preached by them, and recorded by them in the New Testament? And why should we be a part of it? John concludes the preface by stating this objective: "that you also may have fellowship with us" and "to make our joy complete."

John speaks of fellowship rather than salvation in these verses, perhaps because the fellowship had been so recently broken by the Gnostic schism. Properly understood, however, the word includes the full meaning of salvation, as the accompanying phrases indicate. There is salvation on the horizontal dimension. It is an overcoming of hostility between man and man. There is also salvation on the vertical dimension, between God and man. Indeed, John indicates that it is only when the latter is established that the first becomes possible. Why is it that human beings experience friction with one another? The answer, as James writes in his epistle, is sin (James 4:1ff.). And how can sin be conquered? Not by men, certainly, for all are sinners. It can be conquered only by Christ, who died once that fellowship might be restored between man and God and who now lives in order to communicate the power of God in overcoming sin to those who follow him.

Those who are already Christians must take the words of John seriously. He says that the purpose of this great plan of God for the revelation of himself to men and for their salvation is fellowship, and that on the horizontal level. How then can believers be content with that which disrupts their fellowship? Or how can they be content with an evangelism that wins men to God but fails to draw them into a vital and visible relationship with one another? (Boice Expository Commentary – The Epistles of John)

Plumer comments that...

Nothing can excel the blessed fellowship of the redeemed with God in glory. Even here it is very precious. 1 John 1:3. But there the "tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Rev. 21:3, 22. ([THEOLOGY](#))

Samuel Davies writes that...

If you love truly God and the Lord Jesus Christ—then you delight in communion (fellowship) with them. Friends, you know, delight to converse together, to unbosom themselves to one another, and to enjoy the freedoms of society. They are fond of interviews, and seize every opportunity for that purpose; and absence is tedious and painful to them. If you are so happy as to have a friend, you know by experience this is the nature of love. Now, though God is a spirit, and infinitely above all sensible converse with the sons of men—yet he does not keep himself at a distance from his people. He has access to their spirits, and allows them to carry on a spiritual communication with him, which is the greatest happiness of their lives. Hence God is so often said, in the Scriptures, to draw near to them, and they to him, James 4:8; Hebrews 7:19; Psalm 69:18; and 73:28; Hebrews 10:22; Lam. 3:57.

And John, speaking of himself and his fellow-Christians, says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3. This divine fellowship is promised by Jesus Christ to all His friends...

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him..."...23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My

word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. (Jn 14:21, 23)

Ed comment: From Jesus' words, we see that our fellowship with God is clearly impacted by our obedience. The more we obey Him, enabled by His Spirit and His grace, the more intimate is our fellowship with the Father and His Son. Is this not enough to motivate in us a strong desire to obey? The next time you are sorely tempted by that sin which so easily entangles, recall this truth and ask "Do I want the empty, passing pleasures of sin or the unsearchable riches of fellowship with the Father and His Son?"

This mystical fellowship is peculiar to the friends of God—and others know nothing of it. They are represented as rebellious strangers and aliens—who have no communication with God. Ephesians 2:12, Col. 1:21. He is shy of them, and they of him. They keep at a distance from one another like alienated people.

This communion on God's part, consists in his communicating to his people the influences of his grace, to quicken them, to inflame their love, to give them filial boldness in drawing near to him, in assuring them of his love to them, and representing himself to them as reconciled and accessible. And on their part—it consists in a liberty of heart and speech in pouring out their prayers to him, a delightful freedom of spirit in all exercises of devotion, in returning him love for love, and dedicating themselves to him.

Thus there is a kind of interchange of thoughts and affections, mutual freedoms and endearments, between them. And oh! how divinely sweet in some happy hours of sacred intimacy! This indeed is heaven upon earth: and, might it but continue without interruption, the life of a lover of God would be a constant series of pure, unmingled happiness! But, alas! at times their Beloved withdraws himself, and goes from them, and then they languish, and pine away, and mourn, like the mourning turtle-dove that has lost his mate. This fellowship with God may be a strange thing to some of you; and to vindicate the lack of it, you may give it some odious name, such as enthusiasm, fanaticism, or a heated imagination. But I must tell you, if you know nothing of it, your temper and experience is entirely different from all the friends of God, and, therefore, you cannot rank yourselves in that happy number. ([The Nature of Love to God and Christ](#))

Are You Playing "Spiritual Dominoes?" - In the 18th century, an abbot was disciplining two monks for some infraction of the rules. He imposed on them the rule of silence. They could not talk to one another. They tried to figure out some way to fill the long hours. Finally one of them gathered 28 flat stones from the court-yard. Putting different numbers on them, he devised a new game. By using gestures, the men agreed on certain rules, but the most difficult part was keeping silent when one of them scored a victory. Then they remembered that they were permitted to say aloud the prayer, "*Dixit Dominus Domino Meo.*" By using the one word of this Latin expression meaning "Lord," the winner was able to signal his triumph by yelling, "*Domino!*" The monks gave the impression that they were praying, but really, they were playing. Thus the game of dominoes was born.

Steven Cole comments that...

It's easy to put on a religious veneer by claiming that you have fellowship with God, when really, you're walking in the darkness and deceiving yourself. John doesn't want us to play spiritual dominoes. He wants us to experience genuine fellowship with the holy God by walking in the light, as He Himself is in the light.

Eyewitness - "You don't want to interview me for your television program," the man told me. "You need someone who is young and photogenic, and I'm neither." I replied that we indeed wanted him because he had known C. S. Lewis, the noted author and the subject of our documentary. "Sir," I said, "when it comes to telling the story of a person's life, there is no substitute for an eyewitness."

As Christians, we often refer to sharing our faith in Christ as "witnessing" or "giving our testimony." It's an accurate concept taken directly from the Bible. John, a companion and disciple of Jesus, wrote: "We have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you" (1 John 1:2-3).

If you know Jesus as your Savior and have experienced His love, grace, and forgiveness, you can tell someone else about Him. Youth, beauty, and theological training are not required. Reality and enthusiasm are more valuable than a training course in how to share your faith.

When it comes to telling someone the wonderful story of how Jesus Christ can transform a person's life, there is no substitute for a firsthand witness like you.— by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let us go forth, as called of God,
Redeemed by Jesus' precious blood,
His love to show, His life to live,
His message speak, His mercy give.
—Whittle

**Jesus doesn't need lawyers.
He needs witnesses!**

Time Off! - Is there such a thing as a superstar Christian who is so close to God or so godly that he can take time off in his relationship with God?

The idea sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? It's absurd to think that our walk with God is anything but continual, everyday, all-the-time. But in reality, don't we sometimes go our own way and neglect our fellowship with Him?

This principle has a parallel in the world of sports. Grant Hill, a superstar professional basketball player, made this comment about his off-season practice schedule: "I just didn't feel that I could take a week off. When I take one day off, I feel like I'm lacking a bit."

If we as Christians "take time off" from our relationship with God, we too will be "lacking a bit." We will miss the guidance of His Word and the fellowship we experience in prayer. We will be more likely to forget our priorities and drift into forbidden areas that could lead to our downfall.

No matter how long you've been a child of God through faith in Christ, you need to guard your relationship with Him. It's not just about going to church or having daily devotions. It's a continual relationship. Taking time off will seriously weaken your walk. — by Dave Branon (Ibid)

The time we spend in fellowship
With God each day in prayer
Will strengthen us to stand against
Temptation's evil snare.
—Sper

**To keep spiritually fit,
walk daily with Christ.**

Why We Need Others - Although Christians look forward to having joyful fellowship with each other one day in heaven, our relationships here on earth can often be anything but joyful. Someone has described it this way: "To live above with those we love—that will be grace and glory. To live below with those we know—now, that's a different story!"

Isolating ourselves from others doesn't resolve this problem. The one thing we all need, particularly when life is difficult, is fellowship with other believers. 1John 1:3 says that Christian fellowship is "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," but it's also with each other.

We need more than our private "Jesus and me" fellowship, as fundamental as that is. God also made us for a "Jesus and we" fellowship. Reuben Welch wrote, "Christians are not brought together because they like each other, but because they share a common life in Jesus and are . . . learning how to love each other as members of the family."

How can this deeper love become a reality? We must walk in God's light (1John 1:7), be honest about our sins (1John 1:8), and confess them to God for forgiveness and cleansing (1John 1:9).

If we are to grow more Christlike and learn to love, we need one another.— by Joanie Yoder (Ibid)

Christian fellowship provides us
With encouragement and love;
It will help us in our journey
Till we reach our home above.
—Sper

No Christian is meant to be an island.

Communion with God - John MacDuff -

"And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3

It is said of Moses that "the Lord spoke to him face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." Now there is an important sense in which the words may be applied to every true believer. He is favored with intimate and endearing fellowship with his Heavenly Father. View him on his bended knees, in the secrecy of his closet, having shut out the world for a while, with its manifold anxieties. How sweet the privilege he enjoys — that of making all his requests known by prayer and supplication unto God! Is he conscious of his own weakness, of the temptations which surround him, and the many foes which beset him? His earnest cry is, "Hold me up — and I shall be safe!" Well, God is there, being ever near to those who call upon Him in truth, and says to him in return, "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine! When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

Does he feel sorely perplexed as to the course he should pursue, when conflicting claims are pressing upon him? He looks upward, and says in the language of the Psalmist, "Teach me your way, O Lord; and lead me in a plain path because of my enemies." And what answer does God unto unto him? "I will instruct you, and teach you in the way which you shall go; I will guide you with my eye." "I will lead you in paths that you have not known; I will make darkness light before you, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto you, and not forsake you."

Is he oppressed under a deep sense of his exceeding sinfulness, his iniquities being set in fearful array against him, staring him in the face, and covering him with shame and confusion? He knows, however, what it is to look to Him whom he has so often found to be gracious; he therefore prays, "Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities!" And God remembers him with the favor which he bears to His people, and in the plenitude of His compassion He proclaims, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins!" "I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities, will I remember no more."

Sometimes the child of God is in great trouble concerning his temporal needs, his earthly prospects being dark and gloomy. But knowing that He who is the God of grace, is also the God of providence, he draws near to the divine footstool for himself and family, and he there cries, "Remember us, O God, for good; oh! leave us not destitute." And He who hears the young ravens, hears him, and says to him, "Fear not, my poor child; no evil shall befall you, and no plague shall come near your dwelling. Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the Lord will never lack any good thing."

Sometimes, looking forward to the future, he says, "Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone." And the voice from heaven proclaims, "I created you and have cared for you since before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!"

And so with all his needs, and all his wishes — he draws near to God, and God draws near to him, and thus sweet fellowship is enjoyed between them.

There are some who are disposed to sneer at the idea of spiritual communion with God. But let them sneer as they may; let them regard it, if they are so disposed, as a dream of enthusiasm. The believer, however, is not to be laughed out of his enjoyments. Fellowship with God is a privilege with which he would not part for ten thousand worlds! Of all precious things, it is to him the most precious. He regards it as the dawn of eternal day, and feels it to be glory begun below! Fellowship with God is to him, like the grapes of Eshcol which were brought down to the wilderness; it is a draught from those crystal streams which make glad the city of the Most High; it is a flower plucked from the amaranthine bowers of the Paradise above. In a word, fellowship with God is the prelude and pledge of the fullness of joy which is at God's right hand, and in which consists the very essence of that transporting bliss which will be realized by saints and angels forever and ever! And while he gazes upon the toilsome pursuits of men for the things which perish in their using, his language is —

Let others stretch their arms like seas,
And grasp in all the shore;
Grant me the visits of your grace,
And I desire no more!

Christian, is there any ambition in your breast? Here is a noble field for its display!

**O how unspeakable the honor
of holding familiar fellowship
with the King of kings!**

And this honor has, not only the more favored servants of God — but all the saints! This is the hidden manna they have to eat — of which the world knows nothing. This is the joy they possess, which a stranger cannot understand. This is the honor they realize, which comes from God alone. They may be poor and afflicted; they may be frowned upon by an ungrateful and ungodly world; but this makes amends for all — "they have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." ([The Christians Pathway](#))