

1 John 1 Sermons-Wayne Barber

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Introduction to 1 John

It is apparent from a casual reading through 1 John that someone has done something to disturb the audience to whom John is writing. As a matter of fact, they are threatening, by whatever they are doing, the very Gospel, the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to begin a journey into this book. We are going to begin to understand some of the things we must understand if we are going to get the message that John is trying to preach and teach in this book.

We are going to look at three things. First, there is the purpose of the writing of 1 John. Secondly, there is the passion with which it was written and then thirdly, the people to whom it was written. What we are going to be looking at is the structure beneath the surface.

You know there are three rules in Bible study (see **Inductive Bible study**). First is **observation**. So often when you hear wrong doctrine it is because somebody begins to interpret without first of all observing. The second step is the step of **Interpretation**. Interpretation comes from a proper observation. And third is **Application**. How many times have you heard someone start applying Scripture without ever observing it or without ever interpreting the text? So we are going to observe the text, not to the degree that you would do in your personal study, but it will give us an idea of what is underneath the surface of this book to help us understand it as we go through it.

A GREAT FISH STORY ILLUSTRATING IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

No serious bass fisherman drives up to a lake, takes a little worm, puts it on a hook with a bobber, throws it out and expects to catch a fish. Some people think that is what fishing is all about. No, it has much more integrity than that. A serious bass fisherman wants to know something about that lake. Every lake is different. Every cove in that lake is different. He wants to know the structure that is underneath the surface.

Years ago when I was getting into bass fishing, I learned that you had to study topographical maps and find out the depths of the lake. In Brookhaven, Mississippi there was a lake that I wanted to fish. I found it by flying with the pastor I was working with at that time. I looked down and saw this huge lake. You couldn't see it from the road. When we landed I began to inquire about this lake. A man told me the state record fish was probably in that lake. He was a writer for "Outdoor Life." I thought, "I have got to fish that lake."

I spoke to a church there in Mississippi one day and a man walked up and said, "I hear you like to fish." Do I like to fish!? He was associated with that lake. He said, "Any time you want to come bring whoever you want and fish all you want." Well, to make a long story short, the first day we went, we fished for two or three hours and had a couple of bass over five pounds, which wasn't bad. But I was thinking, "I thought this thing was full of big fish." It was ten o'clock in the morning, and we were right in the middle of the lake. We knew nothing about what was underneath the water. We were doing what I told you serious bass fishermen don't do. We had just been trying our best without knowing what was underneath the surface.

The fellow who was with me took a lure out of his box and said, "I am going to throw this lure out and catch the biggest fish in the lake." He threw it out, and I was laughing, "Sure you are." It was about time to go. He was cranking that lure back just as hard as he could crank it and all of a sudden it just stopped dead. I said, "Yes, you've caught the biggest tree in the lake." About that time the rod started going boom, boom, boom. I said, "That is a fish!" The fish weighed over eight pounds.

Well, we almost had a fight in the boat while he was bringing in the fish because he would not give me a lure that looked like his. I finally found one in my box that was similar, threw out in the same general area and had two more bass about seven pounds a piece in the boat before he got his in! To make a long story short, we caught seven bass that day that weighed a total of 49 pounds.

We went home, and I said, "What in the world happened?" I called the man who owned the lake and asked him, "Why is it that we caught bass out in the middle of the lake?" He said, "Oh, son, if you had known the structure underneath the surface, 20 feet down there are trees that are 20 feet tall. Where you were fishing it is 40 feet deep, but 20 feet down the big bass feed. That is where the springs are in the lake. You discovered the secret of the lake accidentally."

We went back the next Saturday and went to the very same spot, chose the same lure, caught seven more bass which weighed 51

pounds. Those were the biggest two stringers of bass I ever caught in my life. A couple of years ago I went back to the same lake after a hurricane. The structure had not changed and the fish were still there.

That is the way it is with God's Word. You have to establish the structure underneath the surface. Don't look at the Bible and say, "Oh, I have a great verse today. God spoke to me." You had better find out the **context** that verse was in before you go telling somebody that God spoke to you. If you'll find the "structure underneath the surface" (the context) it will never change. Every time you go back, you will catch a bigger fish. What you are looking for is always there. Once you have **observed** then you can **Interpret**.

I just wanted to tell a bass fishing story so I told that one. But I want you to understand why I am doing that. Why do we always have these introductions to books? Why do you have to labor through all that stuff? Because what I am going to share with you won't change and when we are in chapter 5 the structure will still be the same. You can't make it be something else. You've got to know why the book was written, who wrote it, who it was written to and the author's purpose. These things are critical to proper interpretation in any study of the Word of God.

First, there is the purpose of why 1 John was written. Why did the Apostle John, apart from his inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write the epistle of 1 John? Several times in the book the phrase "I am writing" or "I wrote to you" or something to do with writing appears in the text. The reason I say "something to do with that" is it depends on your translation. In the New American Standard, several times we find that phrase "I am writing to you." When he does this it seems to bring to the surface the purpose behind the book of 1 John.

Let's just look at those places. We will come back to these verses in a verse by verse study. This is just an overview. In 1 John 1:4 we read, "And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete." The New American Standard says "our" joy, but the King James says "your joy." When I find a discrepancy I go back to the Textus Receptus. It says, "your joy be made complete."

Now you can see why it could be "our." If something is disturbing these people and their joy is not being made complete, then obviously John's joy is not going to be made complete. He is writing it to them so they can understand the truth. Once their joy is complete, his joy could be complete. The idea is the people who he is writing to somehow have lost their joy. The joy is gone. What has pulled away their joy?

Look in 1Jn 2:1. He says,

"My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin."

Now why in the world would he write to believers and tell them not to sin? Any believer knows that. Well, remember, there is something going on in that little community and it is threatening the Gospel of Jesus Christ. John is saying, "I don't want you to fall into sin of any kind." The aorist subjunctive is used here. The subjunctive meaning is not that we don't have the potential to sin, but we do have a choice of whether or not to sin. John is saying, "Stop making those choices. Don't make those choices to sin. I don't want you caught in a sin. But if someone is... " you see. That is the whole idea.

A believer has to deal with sin. Before you come to know Christ you chase sin. After you come to know Christ sin chases you. John is saying, "Some of you have lost your joy. I don't want you to misunderstand. You must not fall into the trap of sin." What kind of doctrine would lead them into that kind of trap? 1 John 2:21 (sermon) says,

"I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth."

The word for "know" there is from the word *eido*. There are two words for "know" and very rarely are they ever translated properly in the sense that we can understand them. One is to know experientially. But there is the other word, to discern, to perceive something. Romans 8:28 (note) reads, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose." We don't know from experience. Yes, we do, but that is not what he is saying. He is saying it is a built-in knowledge to the believer who loves God and is called according to His purpose. There is a discernment that God gives to him.

The Apostle John is saying,

"I am not writing to you because you can't discern the truth. You know the truth. Why are you allowing this thing to come into your midst and pull you off the track? You know the truth. You can discern the truth."

1 John 2:26 says,

"These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

Now the plot is thickening. That verb, "trying to deceive you," is in the present tense. It is not something that they did. It is something they are doing constantly. The word "deceived" (*planao*-word study) means to pull you off the track, to get you away from the faith, to lure you out from under the truth that protects you. John is saying, "I am writing these things because there are those that are

seeking to deceive you."

Maybe this is telling us something of the agenda of the apostle. There is something going on. It must be some kind of false doctrine that has gotten among the people that has robbed them of their joy, that has somehow told them that they didn't have to be accountable towards sin anymore. Now I am beginning to understand.

1 John 5:13 to me sums it all up. Now watch this because it is a tense we have got to see over and over in 1 John. He says,

"These things I have written to you who believe [that is in the present tense, "who are believing, who are in the process of believing right now] in the name of the Son of God [those who are believing daily, constantly, moment-by-moment, not those who once believed but now are being lured off the track] in order that you may know [intuitively] that you have eternal life."

I want to ask you something. Have you ever doubted your salvation? I'll tell you why you have doubted. Somehow you have got your mind off of what God has said. You have listened to somebody else and what they have said. It is because you are not daily believing in Him and living in obedience to Him. That is where the doubt comes from. But to the people who are daily, moment by moment, practicing what they say they believe, doubt will flee away and they will know in their spirit that they have eternal life.

Someone used to say, "Do you know because you know because you know just because you know Jesus Christ is in your life?" If you don't have that kind of knowing I guarantee you something has led you away from living your life built upon the Word of God. Somehow you are not believing Him.

The fact is you are not obeying Him. If you are not obeying Him you are not believing Him. I don't tell you what I believe; I show you by the way that I live. Belief is something you do, not something you tell people about. You show them by the way you believe. And when you believe, God gives you a discerning, a knowing that you didn't have before. You know just because you know just because you know. If somebody can talk you out of your salvation, you might not have had much to start with. And if you are not living it daily, very obviously you have a serious flaw in your thinking as to how salvation is to be lived out.

Why had they lost their joy? What was this doctrine that had gotten among them? What was it that had led them astray, misled them? What is it now that even tells them that they don't have to deal with sin? In 1 John 1:1-5, we begin to get a hint of what is going on, what the doctrine is that has gotten among the people that is somehow threatening the very truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let me tell you what it is first and then show you how he attacks it. First of all, we see that the Gnostic heresy was something that was very prevalent in the days of the writing of 1 John. [Gnosticism](#) is still around, by the way. It is just under a different cover. Many religious programs on television are preaching 21st century Gnosticism. It is not one single thing new. It has been around for a long time. It erodes the faith, the trusting of people in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Gnosticism](#) came from a man by the name of [Cerenthus](#). Cerenthus denied the truth that Jesus Christ ever came in the flesh. He started the heresy that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, not of the Virgin Mary, and that the Spirit of God, the true Christ, never entered Him until He was baptized at the River Jordan by John the Baptist. The Spirit of Christ lived in Him until just before the crucifixion and then departed Him. Now what does this do? It denies the precious atonement for our sins. It denies His death, burial and resurrection. It denies the major tenets of the Gospel. It denies the virgin birth.

A little later it migrated into a different form called [Docetism](#). That simply said that Jesus was a ghost, that He never had a body to start with. He was a spirit, an apparition. It comes from the Greek word which means to seem or to suppose. They said, "He really didn't have a body."

So then, I ask you the question, how can our Gospel be true if He didn't have a body? Because it says in Hebrews 10:5 (note), "A body thou hast given me to do thy will, O God." He came to die for you and for me. It wasn't just human blood that was shed and it wasn't just divine blood that was shed. It was divinely human blood that was shed upon the cross. [Gnosticism](#) completely obliterated the truth of the Gospel of what we have just spoken. It denied everything that these young Christians knew. They were being beleaguered by the ones who were bringing this heresy in their midst.

This is a very dangerous doctrine. [Gnosticism](#) says to the Christian, "Because all of this is true, your flesh is evil." I would agree with that – the lust of my flesh is my problem every day of my life. [Gnosticism](#) said, "Your body is evil. But you are not accountable for sin because a body is going to do what it only can do. It is going to sin. You are spiritual. With mystical knowledge you live inside this body and the more it sins the more you kind of learn about the two different lifestyles." Have you heard the doctrine that is going around when people stand up and confess all these things? They say we are living in a carton. They even use the word "carton." They say, "My body is evil. Therefore, any sin that comes in my life is really not me, it is something outside of me that is causing me to do it and most of it is demonic." There is no personal accountability for sin. There is no personal dealing with sin. "Oh no, we live in a carton. And inside that carton we are like God. The body itself, the carton, is evil. God, you see, doesn't have anything to do with those things that are flesh." Have you heard about this doctrine? It has been in a subtle way in recent years. You know what I

am talking about.

John goes right to the heart of [Docetism](#), not just the Gnostic heresy, when it says that Jesus is an apparition and He didn't have a body to start with. In verses 1-5 look at what he says. "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life." Notice that, "we have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have beheld and our hands have handled." If He didn't have a body, how could we do that? He is trying to let them know, "I am an eyewitness and an eyewitness account is important. I am the apostle and I am telling you something. You had better hang on to what is the authority of the ones God has given it to."

Verse 2 continues, "and the life was manifested, and we have seen and we bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father [he shows the deity of Christ] and was manifested to us, what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Jump to verse 5: "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." All that John is concerned with in those first five verses is found in verse 1 when he says, "concerning the Word of Life." Who is the Word of Life? That is the Logos, the living Logos, Jesus Himself. That is John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God." He is speaking there of Jesus, the preexistent Christ, the fact that He is deity, the fact that He is God's Son.

Then in 1 John 2:1 he seems to attack the whole fallacy of [Gnosticism](#) itself. He says in verse 1,

"My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin."

The Gnostics said that you didn't have to fool with sin because you are not accountable for sin. John says, "Oh, yes, you are. I am writing these things that you may not sin." Then he says,

"And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

That "if" is almost "Oh, did somebody sin?" You see, what we have done is we have made sin so apparent that everybody is doing it. We forget that we are not meant to live that way. So many of us say, "Well, God forgives me." Certainly forgiveness was on the cross. But until we repent do we even understand cleansing and do we ever understand the reality of His presence in our life?

The purpose of writing the book seems to be that a doctrine had gotten into the church, a heresy that had threatened the very tenets of what our faith is all about. It had threatened the truth that Jesus was truly the Son of God, preexistent before He was ever virgin born. It threatens the very truth that He had a flesh body and that He went to the cross to die for our sins. It threatens so many of the things that we hold on to. And when you start listening to that kind of garbage, it causes immediately your joy to disappear. So John writes to his little children in the faith.

Secondly, I want you to see the passion with which John wrote it. We say that John wrote it. How do we know that it was John who wrote it? 1 John is the easiest Greek in the whole New Testament. Only 303 words are used out of the tremendous vocabulary of Greek words in the New Testament. Well, if you study 2 and 3 John you begin to realize that same pattern. You look at the language of it. It doesn't say specifically but in another way it implies that John is the author of this particular epistle.

John is characterized by two words, one that the Spirit led him to announce of himself and one that Jesus gave to him. The one he announced of himself in his Gospel is "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Love is a real characterization of John. But there is another characterization of him and Jesus gave it to him, "Thunder." You have on the one hand "love", and you have on the other hand "Thunder". Let me show you that. In Mark 3 Jesus gives him and his brother James a name. It says in Mk 3:13,

"And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons. And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),"

What is that a prophecy of? One day he is going to become the Rock, obviously. "And James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, 'Sons of Thunder')".

Now what is He saying? I think there are two things He is saying. One of them is their temperament. Let me show you why I say that. Look in Luke 9. I know it is a prophecy of the fact that they are going to be used powerfully like thunder one day. I think there is also something He is saying about their temperament, their personality, the explosiveness that they had. Over in Luke 9:51 Jesus is with His disciples going down to a village of the [Samaritans](#). "It came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him. And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem." The Samaritans didn't honor Jerusalem. They had their own Temple Mount. "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?'" They were really

saying, "Kill them, Lord. Burn them. They won't let you in. Boom, drop the fire on them." I love that about James and John. Jesus said, "You are Sons of Thunder." Boom, you are making a lot of noise and you sure do make some powerful statements. Jesus goes on to explain to them, "That is not really what I came for. Not to burn everybody up, but that men might be saved."

Now why am I bringing all this out? Well, I am talking about the passion with which the book was written, because I think you see both things come out in the epistle: one, the apostle of love as he protected the sheep that he is so affectionate towards; the other, the apostle of thunder, as he absolutely came head-on with the error that had gotten among them. Like a thunderbolt he comes out in the epistle and just directly hits right on the face the error that had gotten among the people.

I want to focus, though, on that word "beloved" that is used in this book. You find it over and over again. In that word is the passion with which this shepherd writes to these sheep. He loves them and he is trying to protect them and get them to where their joy can once again be made complete. Look at 1 John 2:7.

"Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you."

Now if you have a King James, it says "brethren." It does change the word. The New American Standard uses the word "beloved."

Look in 3:2:

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be."

In 1Jn 3:13 the New American Standard translates the word adelphos as "brethren." It is translated the same way the word agapetos is translated back in 3:2 in the King James.

"Do not marvel, brethren (or beloved), if the world hates you."

Look in verse 21, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God." Look in 1Jn 4:1.

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits."

In 1Jn 4:7 it says,

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

1Jn 4:11 reads,

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

I think about that "Son of Thunder" with that personality he had. He wanted to burn the Samaritans. He had the opportunity to be with the greatest example of love you could ever have, Jesus Christ, who is love because He is God. He was changed where even his language to the people he is writing rings with, "Beloved, Beloved." It is the word in the Greek that is the most tender, precious word, dear, dear word. The True Shepherd, as Jesus told John in John 21, has a love for the sheep because he loves those whom the shepherd loves. When he asked Peter in John 21, He didn't say, "Do you love the sheep?" He said, "Do you love me?" (Jn 21:15 - agapao; Jn 21:16-agapao; Jn 21:17-phileo) If I love Him like I ought to, which is what this epistle is all about, then I can love others, the sheep that He loves.

Now I want to tell you what a shepherd does. He guides the sheep, guards the sheep and grazes the sheep because he cares about them. Do you know how he does all three? With the precious Word. He feeds them with the Word, he guides them with the Word, and he guards them with the Word. I say that for a reason. Sometimes being a pastor (and it is going to be this way until Jesus comes back) you get misunderstood. Sometimes I get adamant about what I consider to be error in the Word of God. You have seen it. You have seen it. I mean I just get livid. I've gotten letters so I know that people have seen it. But I want you to know something. I haven't gotten any more livid towards error than this precious apostle did to the people who were beloved to him. I'll tell you why; because the first thing that will steal your joy away from you is when you start flirting with anything that is not a part of this Word of God.

Nothing makes me any more angry than to see something that is perverted from what the truth has to say. I will make people who do it look like they are idiots if I have to in order to get my point across, to guard, to guide and to graze His sheep. Somehow there seems to be in all of us a little bit of this thunder and love. When you love somebody, you want to protect what they think because as they think, so shall they live. You see the purpose of the writing of 1 John, and you see the passion that he had. Beloved. He is so affectionate. All these terms are so affectionate from John. At the same time you see the thunder when he addresses those things that are wrong. He redefines what the truth of the Gospel is all about.

Thirdly, look at the people to whom he wrote. If you study 3 John you find he is writing to a person, Gaius. In 2 John 1:1, he is writing to the chosen lady and to her children. In this epistle he never really identifies who he is writing to. It is very difficult to make

an adamant statement as to who these people are. We do know from the historians and people like [Polycarp](#) that he had a lot of power and influence in the area of Asia Minor, particularly the area of Asia itself which was one of the regions there in Asia Minor. You know in Revelation 1:11 ([note](#)), Jesus said, "Write to the seven churches of Asia Minor." I wonder why He chose John to do that? There was a lot of influence that he had, so most people think he probably wrote from Ephesus and he wrote to them. But we don't know that from the text. You can't say that is it. We just don't know. It doesn't tell us. But it does tell us the levels of maturity of the people that he is writing to. It does tell us that.

We know who can benefit from 1 John by something he says in chapter 2. Some of you are thinking, "You left this one out." No, I didn't. I did it on purpose. He pulls out four major categories of spiritual growth. He starts from the very, very smallest and goes all the way to the most mature. In 1Jn 2:12, 13, 14 we see, "I am writing to you..." It doesn't matter what level of maturity you are on spiritually. There is a message for you and for me in the book of 1 John.

Let me show you. 1Jn 2:12 says, "I am writing to you, little children." The word there is *teknon*. It means little, I mean, birthed, brand new believers if you please. "I am writing to you brand new believers, you little children." It says he is writing, "because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." He is just reaffirming what they should already know. Evidently this heresy is pulling them away from that. "Jesus is God's Son. He did come and die for you. Your sins are forgiven you." The word "forgiven" there is in the perfect passive. You didn't do it, He did it. They have been sent away from you.

In 1Jn 2:13 he is writing to the fathers and they, of course, are the older persons, those who are more mature. He says in verse 13, "because you know Him." Actually it should read "you have known Him, you are in the state of knowing Him." You knew Him back here and you are knowing Him now. Here the word "know" is not discerning and perceiving. It is the word for experientially knowing Him. You experienced Him back here and look how far you have come. Perfect tense means that you are in the state right now of experiencing Him daily in your life. You are the mature ones. So John is saying, "I am writing to you little babes. I am writing to you mature ones."

Then he uses a word in 1Jn 2:13, "I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one." The word "young men" is the word *neaniskos*, which means men in their prime, possibly up until about the age of 40. They are men who have overcome.

The Apostle John uses the term "overcome" more than anybody in the whole New Testament. Look in 1Jn 5:1 and look at how you overcome. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." John is talking about a present tense obeying God.

Then he says in 1Jn 5:4, "For whatever is born out of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith." Separate obedience from faith and you don't have faith anymore. Our willingness to surrender to that which we say we believe overcomes the evil one. John said, "You younger men, you have overcome the evil one." How did you overcome him? Because you have been willing to make conscious choices to obey Christ. When you obey Him, you immediately live in the ranks of the overcomers.

In 1Jn 2:13 he goes to one more word and says, "I have written to you, children, because you know the Father." That is a different word than *teknon*. The word used here is *paidion*. The word *paidion* has the idea of an immature child who needs instruction and needs training. "You know the Father," he says. "You have known Him. You are in the kingdom, but you are immature and you need training."

Look at the four different words. John is saying any believer who reads this, from the time he is birthed into the kingdom until the time he has lived and walked with God for a long period of years, whatever level they are on, this is written to them and they can benefit from studying it and from learning it. So we don't know exactly where the people were from the text, but we do know something about them. They were believers from every category, from the very beginning, all the way to the most mature.

Verse 14 says, "I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning." Evidently there was another letter that he had written to them at some point. The key here is that in the writing of this book, we don't know exactly who the people were. But we know the levels of maturity that they were on. It has something to say to all of them. John has a message for every believer of every spiritual level, a message of assurance, a message that believers are distinctively marked as those who believe and obey the truth, a message that if we live obediently to the truth, we can know Him experientially and we will overcome the enemy with our faith. Basically that is the bottom line message of 1 John. It is one thing to know about it. It is another thing to know it experientially.

I have always loved Tony Evans. He is one of my favorite people and I love to hear him preach. I had been hearing him use an illustration. Tony said, "You know, I am the chaplain of the Dallas Mavericks. I have four season tickets to every game. I sit right on

the floor. When my wife and children don't want to go, I call up my buddies, and I say, 'Hey, guys. Do you want to go to the game and sit on the floor? You are with me. Come on.' They will say, 'Well, where are we going to park? We have to go early.' 'Hey, friend. You are with me. When you pull in the gate, tell them you are with me. Everything is fine. You are with me.'" Sure enough, they pulled in and there he stood and had a pass and they let him park and he walked in. "'Well, what about the crowds?' 'Don't worry about the crowds. You are with me.'" They don't go in the regular door. They go in another door, a special door, just for the people with passes. They go over to an elevator and they don't go where everybody else goes. "'What about eating supper?' 'Don't worry about supper. You are with me.'" They go down this special elevator to a team room and there is the general manager and all the other people who have something to do with the team. Then when it is time to go to the game, I mean five minutes before it starts, they walk out. They walk out the same place that the team members walk out. They walk out on the floor and sit on the second row.

I have heard him tell that, talking about you are with Jesus. But you know, that illustration was sort of distant to me. I couldn't understand what he was saying really. A friend called me up one day and said, "Your expenses are paid and we want you to go with us representing a group here in Chattanooga. We are going to Houston. Then we are going to Dallas and visit with Tony Evans. We are going to spend about two days with him and go through his church, etc." I said, "Oh, man. I'll go."

We got to Dallas and that afternoon we met with him and his wife and some of his family members. We saw all the things he was doing there. He said, "By the way, guys, I want you to go to the ball game with me tonight." Wow! I heard the illustration and I was going to live it! He said, "Don't worry about where you park when you get there, I've got a pass. Just tell them you are with me." I mean he was saying the same thing. We drove down to the Coliseum, pulled up and the guy said, "You can't come in here." We said, "Hold it." Tony was standing over there and we said, "We are with him!" The guy said, "Okay, come on through." We parked in a special place. We walked up to the door. We went in a special door, got in the special elevator and went down and sat right next to the general manager of the Dallas Mavericks. We ate together. We had food already prepared. The time came for the game and we walked out the very entrance where the players walked in. We walked over to the second row. Everybody was looking and calling out, "Hey, Tony. How are you doing?" We were all waving, "Hey, how are you doing? We're with him." We sat on the second row. You know, it was one thing to hear it and believe it. It was another thing to experience it for myself.

Do you have any doubts about your salvation? Are you wide open for false doctrine? You are when you are not living according to what is in this Word right here. "Oh, you are so hard on that." I am just telling you like it is. You are going to be messed up. Your joy is going to escape and I guarantee you that you will end up thinking you are not even saved before it is over. You won't even know that you can know that you can know that you know Jesus Christ until you come back to what the truth is and build your life upon it.

1 John 1:1

What Every Believer Ought to Know

Dr. Wayne Barber

Turn with me to 1 John 2:26. We are still just getting the feel of this book. The more you get the heart beat of it, the more you can start learning what John is trying to tell all of us as he writes this wonderful epistle. I want to entitle this, "What a Believer Ought to Know".

We have already seen that someone has been disturbing the audience of John, the people he is writing to. They have been disturbed and it is very obviously false doctrine. Look at 2:26: "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you." Present tense: they didn't just make one effort and leave. John is saying, "They are constantly seeking to deceive you, to lead you astray, to get you away from the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Go back to 1:4. They had lost their joy. He says, "And these things we write, so that our joy [really it should be "your" joy] may be made complete." What was the false doctrine that was getting in amongst the people? You will learn this as you study through it. You have to understand what [Gnosticism](#) is all about. You will see many facets of it come up in the epistle. John addresses those methodically as he writes to these precious believers in Asia Minor.

[Gnosticism](#) was one of the major threats to the gospel during the day of the Apostle John. It was in several forms and is very difficult to describe it in its full sense because it depends on the sect that you were dealing with as to exactly which direction they went with it. However, [Gnosticism](#) comes from the Greek word gnosis, which means knowledge. Regardless of what sect you dealt with, the Gnostics said a man was saved by knowledge, not because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, but by a mythological idea. It was based on some of the myths of that day. Once you had a revelation of this knowledge, that brought you into what they called a salvation experience. Salvation was of knowledge. Jesus was not necessary in the picture because He didn't die. He wasn't the propitiation for our sins.

You see, the Gnostics believed that all flesh was evil; therefore, God would never have inhabited a human body. Jesus came and died but He was strictly the physical, natural son of Joseph. He was not truly the Son of God.

The particular brand of [Gnosticism](#) that John is dealing with came from a man named Cerenthus. Cerenthus said first of all that Jesus was the natural born son of Joseph and one day, at His baptism, Christ, the Christ, the heavenly Christ came and indwelt Him and lived in Him until right before the crucifixion. Then it departed from Him. Therefore, Jesus when He died on the cross only died as a man. Poor, misfortunate creature!

This developed later into a more advance thinking at that time, [Docetism](#), which said that Jesus was never really in any kind of human form. He was just a ghost. He was an apparition. He was a spirit. He never really had a body. Well, of course, this absolutely undermines everything we know of the gospel of Jesus Christ; that Jesus was God's Son long before He ever came to this earth. He was preexistent. He is the second person of the Trinity. He has always been God and will always be God. He came to this earth, born of a virgin, and took upon Himself a human body without the nature to sin. As a matter of fact, Satan came to tempt Him one day but there was nothing in Him that he could draw out of Him. He did not have the nature to sin.

Don't ever get hung up in the crazy argument, "Could Jesus ever have sinned?" If you will follow that out, that is the most ridiculous argument you could ever have because if He had sinned there would be no more second person of the Trinity which means there wouldn't be a Trinity. How can God deny Himself? You see, Jesus lived a perfect life as the God-man on this earth. He took sin upon Himself, went to the cross, and paid a debt He did not owe. We owed a debt we could not pay. He became the propitiation for our sin. God was satisfied with His death and the shedding of His blood for man's sin. He went there in our place. He resurrected the third day, ascended, and is glorified. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[Gnosticism](#) undermined all of that. They took away the deity of Christ. They denied that He was born of a virgin and they denied that His death upon the cross was ever necessary. Salvation was by this mystical, mythological knowledge. In fact, this knowledge was when you came to a full realization of your true self. Each sect had a different myth it seems. This knowledge that is apart from Jesus, apart from His Word, only a few had. Therefore, they were the saved ones. Once you became a saved person under their system, then you had to learn to deal with your flesh which was evil.

You could go one of two different routes according to the different sects. One was the sect of Asceticism, which means they would deny themselves. Paul dealt with those over in the book of Colossians. Then there was the other side of licentiousness. They believed since you can't beat it, simply give into it. Live in sin, enjoy it. You are not accountable because you are spirit and by your knowledge you have been saved. You just live in a carton right now. You are not responsible for the sin that is going on in your life.

You can see what a major problem and threat they were to the gospel of Jesus during the New Testament time. John wants his readers to know that the only true knowledge, the only true spiritual knowledge comes from the Lord Jesus Christ and from His Word. We need to know this, too. Suppose somebody comes to you and says, "Oh, I have something over here that is not in the Book. It doesn't necessarily have to do with Jesus but, oh, what spiritual knowledge it is." Back off and say, "Oh, God, when you strike him, don't hit me at the same time." The only spiritual knowledge a man can ever have comes from Jesus Christ, revealed by His Spirit and in His Word. That is what John wants his readers to know.

As a matter of fact, the word "know" comes up in at least 25 different verses in the letter to 1 John. It is almost as if he is saying to the Gnostics, "You think you know something? Let me tell my sweet believers, if you want knowledge, remember Jesus Christ lives in you and that is the knowledge you need to have."

There are two words for knowledge that he brings up. One is the word eido. That means intuitive knowledge, perceived knowledge, the ability to perceive something you did not go to a class to learn. It is kind of like when you ask your wife something sometimes and she says, "I just know it." You say, "How do you know it?" She says, "I don't know. I just know." That is the kind of knowledge we are talking about. It is the ability to discern and perceive without ever having been trained to do it. The Spirit of God lives in you, and He gives you that kind of perceiving power, that discernment in your life. That is one kind of knowledge used in 10 verses in the book of 1 John.

The other kind is ginosko. That is when you experientially learn it, either through a classroom or usually the classroom of life. It comes by obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't know it until you surrender to it. You learn it as you go along. I love that verse over in Philippians when Paul says, "I have learned, therefore, to be content." I love that! Do you know what that tells me? It tells me that Paul made some of the same bad decisions I have made. He did it and said, "Oh, boy, was that bad!" He did it again. "Oh, I am not going to do that again. I have learned, therefore, to be content." You don't get it intuitively. It is not discernment, a divine perception, it is something you have to go through. It is something that you learn by experiencing the Lord Jesus Christ. That kind of knowledge is used in 15 different verses in the book of 1 John. So I want to show you what the believer ought to know. Intuitively or experientially? What should he know that will help him stand firm against the false doctrines of this world? What is it? What should every believer know?

Look over in Colossians. I just want you to see what Paul says in Colossians 2:1, 2, 3. He is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. If you ever think there is knowledge, spiritually, outside of Him, then I want you to read these verses and memorize them. "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (notes Colossians 2:1; 2:2; 2:3)

Do you want knowledge? Bow before the One who is the treasure house, the store house of all knowledge and wisdom. Come to His Word. Surrender to it. When you receive Him in your heart, intuitively you will know so many things. But then you will begin to experientially learn of Him and the knowledge we are looking for is found in a person. It is not found anywhere else. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what should every believer know? Obviously we will get to all of these verses in their context, but I just want to whet your appetite. What is it that a believer should know? Turn to 1 John 2. The word "knowledge" does not appear until chapter 2. I want you to see first of all what every believer should know intuitively. What is it that God gives you and me the ability to perceive and to discern that we don't have to learn anywhere else? You can get saved today and have this exact knowledge tomorrow. It is something built in. It comes with the package of the Holy Spirit that comes into your life. What are the things we should know?

1Jn 2:20 says, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know." Actually that should be "you know all." The word "know" there is *eido*, and it is the word that means you perceive all things. There is someone in you that gives you a discernment now that you didn't have before. Christ has come in His Spirit, lives in you and gives you a perception, an ability to discern that you didn't have before.

Back up to 1Jn 2:18 and you will see specifically what he is talking about. "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists (see [antichrist](#)) have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour." This is a different word for "know." 1Jn 2:19 continues, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?"

Do you see how he is coming against that false doctrine? He is saying, "Listen, believers, don't you listen to these people. You've got something built in. You know that the man, Jesus, is the Christ, the anointed One, the Messiah. He has always been God. Don't you let these people come to you and shake your faith. You know that and you know it within."

If you truly are a believer, there is no excuse for you ever listening to any kind of error that ever questions the fact that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the man Jesus, the Christ, the promised Messiah. It is built in. You already know that. Stand on what you know. You don't have to be taught that. You know it in your spirit. Every believer should know that.

Secondly, in 1Jn 3:5 we know that Jesus came to take away our sins: "And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." Look at 1Jn 3:6:

"No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

Immediately you know what sect of that Gnostic heresy you are dealing with here. It was that group of licentiousness, that group that said, "Hey, you live in a carton. Go on and live in sin, man. You can't beat it, go on and join it." The Word of God says, "No, sir. You have a discernment within you built in by the Holy Spirit of God that says Jesus came to take away sin and the believer should never, ever allow sin to become a practice in his life."

Let me show you the difference. Before you became a Christian there was no one living in you to convict you of anything. You had a moral consciousness that was developed by society and you knew right from wrong but you had no clue about good and evil. There is a huge difference. You can teach your son right and wrong, send him to University, and when he gets there they change the standards. What was right and wrong in your house is no longer right and wrong there. It is always determined by the ways of society. But good and evil never change. Once you become a believer, you know good and well that it was because of the evil of your life that Jesus came to die. When you become a believer, you no longer pursue sinful living.

If you find somebody who says, "I am a member of Such and Such Church, but boy, do I ever love..." and he begins to name his sin, back off and say, "Wait a minute. God says in His Word that man cannot know Christ. There is no possible way. You don't pursue sin and claim to be a believer." Do you know why that is not very acceptable in our society today? It is because we have so watered it down over the last 200 years. Nobody knows what a Christian is anymore. They think it is a member of the local church. That is about as far as they can go with it. You don't pursue sin and claim to know Jesus Christ because you have a built in knowledge of the Holy One. He is letting you know that sin pursues you and you will deal with it until Jesus comes, but you no longer

can pursue and claim to be a believer in Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, look at 1Jn 3:14, 15. What should we know? What is this intuitive knowledge? Every believer should know this. We should know that we no longer live in death. We have been moved into eternal life. Now watch this. Verse 14 says,

"We know [eido] that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

That is a long one, and I can't wait until we get into the context of that. But I just want to show you something. One of the things about the Gnostics was they cared about nobody but themselves. Selfish, arrogant, you name it. That was Gnosticism. The Lord Jesus said, "You have a built in knowledge here. Now come on, don't be so off the wall. You have a built in knowledge. You know good and well that you no longer live in death." How do you know? You know by the love that God has put within you for your brothers and your sisters in the family of God.

When you become a believer, overnight God puts within you an affinity and affection for the family of God that is something that you cannot even explain to anybody. The day before you couldn't stand people; the day after, you love everybody, especially in the family of God. You find people jumping from church to church to church, starting splits, causing problems. They don't care about the people who are their brothers in Christ. I seriously question whether they even know Jesus.

We are going to get real serious about Christianity in 1 John. It cuts no corners and straight out puts it down. If you don't love your brother, you had better check out your salvation. That is the way you know that you are in Him. That is the way you know that you are in eternal life. Every believer has that built-in discernment. How do I know I love Him? I know it by the love He has given me for the brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Turn to 1Jn 5:13. We ought to know that we have eternal life. Not only have we been transferred into it, but we have eternal life. Verse 13 says,

"These things I have written to you who believe [present tense] in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know [eido] that you have eternal life."

There was a man who was a principal of a school. We had a Bible study in his school. Finally, through some of the local priests of another faith, they got us out. They said we were preaching Baptist doctrine. This man came to me one day and said, "Listen, you can't come over here and tell these students that they can know that they are saved, that they can know that they have eternal life. No man can know." I said, "I beg your pardon, 1 John 5:13 says,..." and I quoted it to him. He looked right back at me and said, "Say that again." It is amazing how the Word of God clears up a lot of our thinking.

Do you know you have eternal life ([Eternal Life](#))? I'll tell you what your problem is if you are truly a Christian and you don't know: you are not believing. That is present tense. You are not daily obeying Him. You are not daily trusting Him. Two weeks ago maybe you were, but something has happened in your life and as a result you have slipped back instead of stepping forward. That will shut you down and you will doubt your salvation like never before. When you start believing Him, you will know that you have eternal life. Present tense is always used for people who are Christians, not past experience.

I want to tell you something. Talk is cheap. If you know Jesus Christ, it is going to be seen today, not 30 years ago in your life. The Holy Spirit of God lives in you. One of the epistles calls Him the divine referee. Do you think He won't blow the whistle on somebody who says they have something that they don't have?

Look at 1Jn 5:15. The word eido is used again.

"And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

I can't wait to get to this one either. You see, we have a listening ear with the Father. Do you know that? Do you know the Father will listen to you? He gives you His undivided attention.

I want you to see something here. We will have to get to it in chapter 5, but I want you to see this. We know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. Be real careful. It doesn't say we have received the answer for which we were looking. That is not what the text says. People love to get on television and throw that doctrine out. "Ask for it. You are God's child. He is your cosmic bellhop. He will do what you want." No way. Your Father will give you a listening ear. Go on and bring anything you want to bring before Him, but your Father will never grant a request that is not somehow within His divine perfect will for your life. Ask all you want.

We have individual requests. We can always bring anything before Him, but He looks for the heart and He examines it according to

His divine purposes in our life. The believer knows he has a listening ear with the Father. He knows that He will give him His undivided attention. Do you know that?

Let's look in 1Jn 5:18, 19, 20. It is all down through the last part of the book. Verse 18 says, "We know [eido] that no one who is born out of God sins." Now be careful. That is in the present tense. He means sins in a habitual way. We have already seen that. You don't live in sin and call yourself a believer. The verse goes on, "but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him." We will get to that in context.

Here is something else we know. We know that we don't habitually sin. We can't live in habitual sin. Verse 19 says, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." We can know that we are out of God. We are not of this world. We are out of God. Big difference. 1Jn 5:20 reads,

"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

I can know that I am in Him and He is in me. He is in this world because I am here. He lives in me. "How do you know that?" I don't know, I just know. He lives in me. I am in Him. He is in me.

There are things the believer knows. You ought to check these things out. We ought to know some things. It is built in. We didn't have to be taught this in a class. We know it. We just know it. Now, that is intuitive knowledge.

But he also brings out some things that are experiential knowledge. What do I mean by that? You can know some other things, but you are going to have to obey the condition to get it. In other words, you are going to have to obey Him. If you do this, you can know this. That is experiential knowledge. That is ginosko. Paul said in Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Him and the power of His resurrection." That is experiential. He knew Him intimately as his Savior and Lord, but he wanted to experience Him on a day by day basis.

Now, with that in mind, what is it that we can learn from Him? What knowledge does God have for us? I haven't studied it all the way through yet, but every time he puts down the word "know," I guarantee you, somehow it is refuting some tenet of the false doctrine that is coming against the people there in Asia Minor. I can't wait until one of these days when I have enough time to work it all out and find out all that he is saying. It is beyond my understanding or comprehension at this time.

What can a believer know experientially? Now look in 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5. The first thing he can know experientially is we can know beyond any doubt that we know Him. And that is only by our willingness to obey. We said that a while ago but here we find it with the right word. Look at verse 3: "And by this we know [experiential knowledge] that we have come to know Him [in the past], if we keep His commandments." Now, if there is an obedient spirit within me to do what God wants me to do, I know then that I know Him.

I don't know how many times Christians have come to me and said, "I don't think I am saved." I say, "Why?" "I just don't know." I say, "Why do you come to me?" They say, "Well, I just want to obey Christ. I want to do what He asks me to do." I thought to myself, "Well, why would a lost person want to do what Christ wants them to do?" It is something within you. It is built in. You want to obey Him. Obedience is not something somebody has to knock you over the head to do. It is built in.

He says in 1Jn 2: 4,

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

I like the way he put that. John says, "He is not mistaken. He is not a little bit off the wall. He is a liar!" I like that. He is a liar and the truth is not in him. He is lying. Verse 5 continues, "but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected." So we can know that we are in Him, but how do you know? Because you want to obey Him. It is something inside of you. You want to obey Him. There is the "want to" within you. It doesn't mean you always do it, but the "want to" is there. When you don't do it, you run to Him. Why? Because you are obeying Him and doing what He told you to do when you don't do it. Did you get all that?

Now look again at 1Jn 2:18:

"Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour."

How can you know that it is the last hour? You hear people talking about the last hour, the last days. How do you know we are in the last days? You can look around you and see all the people who are antichrist arising daily. Daily they are coming on the scene. Because of this, you have this knowledge that you didn't have before. You know now. You know the days you are living in because all you have to do is look around you at the people who reject and are antichrist.

Look at 1Jn 3:16. We can know how to love:

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

How can I know how to love like Christ? How can I know what love is? Well, by learning that it is not in word, it is in deed. Look in verse 17:

"But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

How can I learn to love others? It is not by telling them, it is by meeting a need that they have in their life. You learn it by experience. You learn to love. It just doesn't happen. You learn it. You know love by this.

Look at 1Jn 4:2, 3, 4, 5, 6. "By this you know the Spirit of God." John tells them to test the spirits. How do I know the spirit? How do I know when I am dealing with somebody who is led of the Spirit?

"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

We can know when we are dealing with somebody who is led of the Spirit of God and we can know when we are dealing with somebody who is not led by the Spirit of God. We learn it by experience. The more you are around these kinds of people, the more you listen to what they say, denying the fact that Jesus came in the flesh, the more you learn to test the spirits in somebody's life. We will get to that in the context.

1Jn 4:11 tells us we can know that we abide in Him and He is in us. Watch this:

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

Look at verse 16:

"And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

How can we know that we abide in Him? Again by loving one another.

Well, we could go on and on, but each time we look at it, there is something I can intuitively know and there is something I can learn by experience. But the place that I need to come to and learn from is at the feet of Christ who is the treasure of all knowledge and all wisdom and His Word. There is nothing spiritual I can learn outside of Him. I learn from Him. I learn from His Word. I learn from obeying His Word. There is no mystical knowledge. All this other stuff is all bound up in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is incredible to me how many people want to go someplace else to find knowledge. It is incredible to me how many people think they have knowledge apart from knowing Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

When you start listening to some of this doctrine that is floating in from everywhere, you had better remember, if you are a true believer, there are some things you know, you already know it and nobody has to remind you. You know it. So quit denying what you are sensing in your Spirit. Then secondly, get busy and start living out what you tell other people you have because the more you live it out, the more experiential knowledge you are going to have and the more protected you are going to be from error ever getting into your life.

How many times have we said it! Get in the Word, obey the Word and that becomes a protection in your life. What does Ephesians tell us? The garment that comes from surrender is our armor in chapter 6. That is almost the same thing John is saying. He is writing to these believers in Asia Minor and saying, "Guys, you want knowledge? Quit chasing after those guys. Come to Christ. Get in His Word." You have knowledge built in that you don't even know you have yet, but it is there. You have been denying it. Start learning to obey Him. The more you obey Him, the more knowledge you will increase in. As you walk in Him, you learn of Him. I am thankful I don't have to go anyplace but to Jesus to find knowledge. Oh, now if I want to learn how to fly a jet plane, I can go take a course. If I want to learn how to run a factory, I can go take schooling on that. But we are talking about spiritual knowledge. The only place you are going to find it is at the feet of Christ with a humble spirit saying, "Lord, I want to surrender to all Your Word has to say." Over in Matthew He says, "Come unto Me and learn of Me." He will show us everything we ever needed to know.

The next time you watch a program on television, listen. Not everything is bad on television. But when you are listening, listen to what you are hearing and see what the Spirit of God inside you says. Does it bear witness or does it not with what God has said? You are going to be surprised how protected you already are because of the treasure, wisdom and knowledge living within you.

1 John 1:1-4

That Our Joy May Be Made Complete!

Dr. Wayne Barber

We have introduced the book now for a couple of times and we want to get right into 1Jn 1:1, 2, 3, 4. I am going to take my title from verse 4, "That Our Joy May be Made Complete!" You know and I know that our joy is found in a person and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. As we obey Him, as we cling to His Word, that is where our joy comes. It grows. It is an ever increasing joy as we focus our lives only on Him.

The Apostle John was an eyewitness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, if you will turn to the book of Luke with me, he would be included with those that Luke mentioned in Luke 1:1,2. Luke says as he begins his gospel,

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus."

He speaks of those who became eyewitnesses and as a result, became servants of the Word, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact, Jesus said something of those men who were eyewitnesses, those apostles. Look over in Luke 10:23, 24. By the way, if you are studying and you just want something to thrill your heart, get into this passage and fill in the blanks. Oh, what a beautiful passage. The Lord Jesus says in verse 22, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." And turning to the disciples, He said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.'"

The Apostle John was an eyewitness of all that the prophets had prophesied. He saw the Lord Jesus in human form, the Lord Jesus come in the flesh here to this earth. Now John must have been upset when he found out that the believers over there in Asia Minor were being deceived into something that denied everything of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to 1 John 2:26. I want you to keep remembering why he is writing this epistle. It is very important. There were those who were seeking to deceive the believers and anyone else who would listen to them. In verse 26 it says, "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you." That is in the present tense. It means that they are constantly, constantly trying to deceive and lead those people astray.

Here is the Apostle John, one who had both seen these people birthed into the kingdom and had ministered to them in Asia Minor. Now somebody is coming in and telling these precious believers and others who will listen that Jesus was not really a man, that Jesus was a ghost and you don't need Jesus in your life. Can you imagine how upset you would be if somebody was doing that to people you had labored over and prayed for and seen birthed into the kingdom of God!

Evidently the false teachers of that day followed the New Testament pattern. Now let me explain. When you go through the epistles you begin to realize that false doctrine was something that everybody seemed to have to deal with. As a matter of fact, whenever you find a second epistle, it is usually dealing with false doctrine: 2 Corinthians, 2 Peter, all the way through. The whole book of Jude deals with false teachings. But there is something that is very common. There is a common denominator with all the false teaching that was going on during those days, and I want you to see it. We won't look at all of them, but just enough to give you an idea.

Look at 2 Peter 2:1. The question comes to your mind and should come to all of our minds, "Were these false teachers, these Gnostic teachers, these followers of Cerenthus, were they in church? Were they among believers? Or were they out here someplace trying to lure the people out of the church?" I want to show you that the common thread, the pattern in the New Testament about false teaching is, it doesn't usually stay outside the church. It comes inside the church. That is where you have to watch it. People will sit next to you and sing and cry at the right time. But as soon as they see you vulnerable, as soon as they see you open to what they want to tell you, they will pull in their error which will lead you astray and cause you to lose your joy in Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 2:1 reads,

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." (see note)

I am not going to take that passage and develop it, but I want to show you a few words out of 2 Peter 2:1 that will help us see the pattern of how false teaching was a constant problem among the Christians of that day. The word "secretly" there in verse 1 is the word **pareisago** (word study). Para, means alongside, and eisago means to introduce or bring in. The idea is they bring in their error but you don't see it. They are not out in a big tent trying to get people to be persuaded to follow them instead of Christ. Oh, no. They very secretly bring it in. They gain your confidence. They win your confidence. They join the church. They learn your language. They always have their error, and they will put their error right beside the truth. A false teacher will not say wrong things 100% of the time. He will say 90% of the right things and then take 10% of what is wrong and destructive and deadly and begin to mix it in. If I had a thousand bottles of milk and somebody poisoned one of them and I didn't know which one it was, they may as well have just poisoned all thousand of them! That is the danger of these people. They may be 90% correct, but the 10% is the damnable, destructive, fatal thing that will lead you away from anything that will bring you joy in Jesus Christ. You had better be careful and know the gospel and stand upon those things that God has said. They secretly bring it in. When you are not looking, they lift up the error and you think it is truth and before you know it, your joy is gone and you don't even know why.

They are destructive heresies. The word **destructive** (word study) means damnable. It is the word **apoleia**, which means totally fatal. It is that which will take a believer and steal everything away from him that God wants to give him. It is that which takes a person who is not a believer and sends him straight to hell. That is what we are talking about. That is how destructive they are. They are not just something that will bother you for a while and go away. They are things that are fatal to bringing you joy in the person of Jesus Christ.

The word **heresy** (word study) means based on opinion instead of truth. Actually the word means to select, to choose. It is when someone will look in the Bible and say, "I like this verse, that verse and this verse and that verse. And I tell you what I am going to do. I am going to mix my opinion into that." That is where you get the idea of what a heresy is. It is not as if there is no truth. It is polluted truth. They know 90% of what is right to say. The 10% is where you find the problem.

I want you to notice again in verse 1. He says, "But there were false prophets also among the people." They will be in the body itself. It is not going to be just out there. Oh, they are out there. But they are going to come in the body. In Philippians 3:18 (note) Paul says almost the same thing in a little different way. He is talking about people who are right there with them. He says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even now weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." These people are all around us at all times.

Have you ever gotten to be friendly with somebody who doesn't understand and believe the doctrine of the Word of God? They don't adhere to what God says. After a while your friendship seems to develop and you are having a great time with them. Then suddenly one day you notice that your time alone with God has disappeared and your joy is gone. All of a sudden, even though you weren't aware of it, you have been led astray. Watch out because these people are everywhere. They are rampant. They are among us, enemies of the cross, legalists, even those who would be like the Antinomians that Paul had to deal with. It is always somehow mixed in.

The licentiousness is there. The Gnostics said, "Since you can't fight sin, join it. It doesn't matter. You can sin a little bit. If you want to go out and drink on the weekend, it's okay. Help yourself. It is alright. You can participate in immorality. You are just dabbling in it a little bit. It is alright." All of a sudden your joy is gone because somebody has deceitfully and secretly and privately led you astray from what the Word of God says will bring you joy in your life.

Look at the book of Jude. The whole book is about false teachers. I want you to see again, they are among us. Now you are wondering why I am doing this and I'll tell you in a minute. Jude 1:4 says,

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

They have crept in! Secretly, they are among us. Next time you lose the joy in your salvation, ask yourself, "Who am I fellowshiping with? What do they believe? Have they somehow gotten me out of the will of God by their conversation, by whatever else they are doing?" Look out. The enemy among us is the person who doesn't adhere to what this Book has to say.

You may ask, "Why are you bringing all that out?" I'll tell you why. Because I think when John writes this, he has in his mind the knowledge that this letter is going to be read among the Christians there in the area where he is ministering. He knows that when he writes this, he is writing it to believers, the immature ones, the fresh ones born into the kingdom, the young men, those that are mature ones. We know that. But he also knows that when they stand up to read this letter to the believers, mixed in with them are

going to be the false teachers and the converts to that false teaching. He is going to say some pretty powerful things before this book is over. "We know they are not of us because they left us. Had they been of us, they would have stayed with us."

I really believe that is right because the pattern of false teaching in the New Testament is not out there. It is among us. John knows that. John also knows these letters were read to the believers in certain congregations. He knows when they are read, even though he is writing to believers, the false teachers are going to be out there. There is a contrast through the whole book of "This is a Christian and this is not a Christian." There is a line drawn between the two. John is wanting to make sure that he nails that false doctrine to the wall. Anything that takes away from the deity of who Christ is automatically begins to lead a person astray from that which will bring joy in his life.

That kind of sets the scene for me. As I read this I am thinking, "John is writing this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. He is thinking to himself, 'Oh, they are going to be sitting out there. Watch this.'" You can almost sense when the people receive the letter and someone stands up to read it in their midst, all the false teachers, all of those who have been teaching stuff that is not right, all of those who have been leaving the service and talking about that which is not right, are standing there. The apostle writes a letter and they start to squirm because all of a sudden, what they have been saying is nailed to the wall as that which is false. Get that in your mind when you are studying 1 John. They are there listening. John has a word for them. I believe there is righteous indignation. Something has risen up inside of John. The Holy Spirit of God is directing the anger at the problem, not the people and he is writing this beautiful epistle that we see.

Well, let's read 1Jn 1:1-4:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life – and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write, so that your [not our] joy may be made complete.

Those first four verses begin the attack on the false doctrine that is plaguing the churches to which John is writing. I want to just take three things from those verses. I am just going to work through the verses and let you see what John is doing.

The first thing he does is take them back to the very beginning when they first heard the gospel. You know in John 1:1 and in 1John 1:1 he uses the word "beginning." I want to submit to you that in 1 John he doesn't mean the same thing as in John. I'll show you that in a moment. You see, what he is about to do is to say, "Guys, the message hasn't changed. What I taught you, what I wrote to you has not changed one single bit. What are you doing listening to anything other than what I gave to you as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Watch this:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life.

He gives you the subject, "concerning the Word of Life." That is Jesus Christ. That is who we are talking about. It is God having come in the flesh. What you have heard about Him, concerning Him, from the very beginning has not changed one bit.

These folks knew John. It is obvious from the way he uses terms of endearment, "beloved, beloved." You don't use that for people you don't know. He was very dear to them. You know good and well, if they knew him like that and he had such an effect on them, that they had read his gospel. Having read his gospel, then they would know what he said from the beginning. Let's go to John 1:1 and show you what he starts off with. This is his gospel. They have read it. I was reading this and was thinking, "I sure wish he had said it a little clearer because you wrestle with it. It takes you forever to try to decide what he is trying to say." To me it is so simple. He is just taking them back to the beginning. "Hey, guys, from the very beginning this is what I said. It hasn't changed a bit. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. He came to this earth and manifested Himself as the God-man."

Look in John 1:1. Here he uses the word "beginning" that encompasses all beginnings. He says "In the beginning." In other words, before there was ever a beginning. Did you realize all the world had a beginning, but not the Word? The Word has always been. He said, "In the beginning was...," imperfect tense. **Imperfect tense** means always had been, was then, is now and always will be. The Jehovah's Witnesses get hold of this verse and don't have a clue what it says. John was dealing with Gnostics, but we are dealing with other kinds of false teaching. This nails that doctrine to the wall. They say, "Jesus was just a man and was created." Friend, Jesus is the Word. He is God. He has always been, imperfect tense.

He said, "In the beginning was the Word." The word "Word" there is logos. The word means intelligence. In the beginning was the

divine intelligence. Who do you think came up with all of this? God did. Nobody else could have thought it up. The divine intelligence. "And the Word [Divine Intelligence] was with God, and the Word [the Father and the Divine Intelligence] was God."

That imperfect tense begins to move its way down through the verse. Look at verse 14. This Divine Intelligence was beyond what any man could fathom. Paul tells Timothy He dwelt in unapproachable light. No man can approach this Divine Intelligence who no individual human being can ever, ever, ever begin to fathom. This Divine Intelligence became flesh. John says, "From the very beginning it has not changed. What do you mean, listening to a man who says Jesus was a ghost. From the very beginning He has been. He came to this earth as flesh. He didn't just dwell in a body of flesh. He became flesh." We will come back to that in just a second.

The authority with which John has to speak here is as an eyewitness. That is what he says in 1 John, "What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life." Do you know what I believe he means by "we"? I don't think that is some author's privilege of using the term "we." I think he is referring to the apostles. What he is simply saying is, "We all agree and you know that we agree. We saw Him. You didn't see Him. We did. We beheld Him and we heard Him and our hands touched Him."

I believe that is inferring even after He was resurrected because, remember, He told the disciples, "A spirit doesn't have flesh and bones. Touch Me. See that I have flesh and bones." Boy, that messed them up. Some people don't believe He raised bodily, they say He raised spiritually. That is heresy. If He didn't raise bodily, then we can forget our resurrection when the Lord comes back for His church. We can forget that. That is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. We heard Him, we saw Him, and we beheld Him.

The word "beheld" grabs your attention real quickly. It is the word theaomai. It is the word from which we get the word "theater." "We saw" and "we heard" are in the perfect tense. John is saying, "All this happened. We watched Him as if we were in a theater watching a drama unfold in front of us. But we saw more than just something on a stage removed from us." Look back in John 1:14. The word "beheld" is used there and it shows you what they beheld about Him, not just His flesh. They beheld His deity. That is what John is trying to tell them. John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld [same word] His glory." John says, "Man, we didn't just see Him as some individual, a human son of Joseph and Mary. We saw Him as the divine Son of God of the Virgin Mary. He was God who became flesh."

John is taking them back and he is saying, "Guys, what are you doing? I am an apostle. We saw Him. We heard Him. What we told you from the very beginning has not changed. The gospel is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is not going to change. It is God's Word. Jesus Christ is God."

He goes on to say, "concerning the Word of Life." There are two words for life that are so important. The word bios means the means of life. As a matter of fact, you can get into the business of life. Ask a Baptist what life means. "Oh, I have got the life, man, because I am busy." That is not what John is talking about. The word zoe is the word he uses here. The word zoe is the word that means essence of life. He is the eternal essence of life. He is the eternal essence. Not only does He give it, He is eternal life. He is the Divine Intelligence. He is the Divine Essence of eternal life. He became flesh and we saw Him and we heard Him and we beheld that He was more than a man. He was the God-man. This has not changed.

If you are not real careful and you don't adhere to what the apostles have given us in scripture in the New Testament and you sever yourself from what the apostles have said, you are going to enter into the most miserable life you have ever had in your life. There is no joy apart from what His Word says. There is no joy apart from what we know to be the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. False teachers will say what you want to hear and then they will put their error right beside it. You will lose your joy so fast it will make your head swim. Your joy is always measured by your willingness to accept what the Word of God says and your allegiance and surrender to the God-man, Jesus Christ, in whom is the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who came and who lived, was born of a virgin. He didn't appear as a ghost. He wasn't the son of Joseph in the natural sense. He was birthed of the Holy Spirit.

Don't ever lose that in your life or you are going to end up just like these people to whom John is writing. He starts them from the beginning and he basically is saying, "The message hasn't changed. What we told you, stand on. We saw, we heard, we beheld, we even handled with our own hands." That killed all that which Cerenthus was trying to say. It has not changed.

The second thing shows how it got from John to the people in Asia Minor. In other words, this is the normal plan of witnessing. This is the way it ought to be. Once we have experienced it, we go and proclaim. John simply says, "From the very beginning the way you found out about it was from us. Look at verse 2: "and the life was manifested." I love this. The word "manifested" is phaneroo, which means to be put on display for all to see. The life was manifested. It goes on, "and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life," pointing again to God in the flesh, "which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

The interesting thing is God chose to manifest Himself, to put Himself on display. Now understand, even though we have come to understand Jesus and know Him, we don't have a clue yet what all of God is all about. I hear people talk about this sometimes. "Oh, Brother, I have all of God." Well, true, but in a sense you don't quite understand. You have what God has apportioned to you. In

other words, He has given you of His Spirit but you haven't touched it yet. I believe a million years into glory we are going to be walking around saying, "Hallelujah! I didn't know that." Ten million years later you will be going around, "Oh, man, I will never be able to take it all in." But God chose to make Himself small and become the Life in human form. Yes, He was the Life.

John 1:14 says He became flesh. I mentioned a moment ago that we would come back to this. What does "He became flesh" mean? The Gnostic would say, "Yes, we believe that. He became flesh the moment John baptized Him. Then He ceased to become flesh right before His crucifixion. That is when He left Him." Oh no, you don't understand, He became flesh. Are you with me? He didn't just indwell flesh. He didn't go around looking for a good body. He finds the body and says, "I am going to get in him." He enters into it. That is not what it means. He was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary and became flesh.

I know some of you are saying, "I don't understand that." I want to say something back to you so profound... neither do I! As a matter of fact, if you can comprehend that, you have just proven to me that God is no bigger than our brain. God is so much bigger than anybody. It comes to the point you have to accept that by faith. You see, we don't walk by sight. We walk by faith. Basically John is saying, "Hey, guys, we saw Him. We heard Him. We were appointed as apostles. We even touched Him and handled Him after He was resurrected from the grave. We have written to you. And what we have said has not changed. We proclaim it to you. We have seen it. We proclaim unto you. It was revealed to us. We didn't think it up. It didn't come out of a frustration with some church we were going to. God revealed it to us."

Man does not discover what God hides. God has to reveal it to man. So he takes them back to the very beginning and says, "Hey, what was from the very beginning, guys, understand. We saw and we heard." Then he says, "We saw, so therefore, we have proclaimed unto you. How do you think you came to be what you are? It is because of the Word based on what we saw and heard and what God has documented in our life."

Look at verses 3 and 4. He begins to explain to them the motive behind telling them all this. He is going to go in other directions. But he is letting them know something here. Look at what he says: "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." I have never wrestled over anything as much as I have this verse. 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."

A person who is wide open to false doctrine is a person whose focus is not on the Lord Jesus, the Son, in full surrender and abandonment to what His Word has to say. When that happens watch him depart from the Word of God. That is just something that hit me as I was studying. Somebody who is not walking with a surrendered life is wide open to false doctrine.

We have dealt with it so much in the past 13 years at Woodland Park. I wish I could tell you what we have had to deal with. Sometimes in a message I come across so hard on something. I mean I nail it. No, I don't just nail it, I drive it in the ground and bury it. The people probably think, "Wow, he is wired tonight." They don't know what we knew was beginning to seep into the body as doctrine that doesn't hold itself accountable to the Word of God.

If you are not walking right with Him, if there is an area of your life that is disobedient, somewhere there is false doctrine in your walk. Somehow you have embraced the idea that you can sin and get away with it because God doesn't care. Somehow legalism or something has gotten into your life. Look out because your joy is going to go with it.

The apostle says, "Hey, if your fellowship is with Him, it will be with us." He uses the word "fellowship" three times – in verse 3, 6 and 7. Now verses 6 and 7 have a totally different meaning altogether. But we haven't got there yet. I think what he is saying right here is, "You want to fellowship with us? You find it with Him first. When you find it with Him, you will have no trouble with what we

say. But you had better focus on Him first. Then the doctrine will take care of itself."

In verse 4 he completes his thought: "And these things we write, so that your joy may be made complete." The word **complete** (word study) means that it might be fully accomplished, that you might be filled to the very brim with the joy that is rightfully yours in Jesus Christ. Don't let false doctrine get you off the track. Don't let what someone says about Jesus lure you away from what the Word of God documents.

One of my dearest friends went to the same seminary I did two years before me. Virginia is not known for being the most conservative state in the world. He went there wanting to preach the Word of God. He got in the classroom of a man who didn't believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and didn't believe in the virgin birth. It began to erode his mind by tearing down the things he had thought he believed all these years. He left seminary, wrote all his friends a letter and said, "I am going out into the world to preach what is really truth." He has so embraced the New Age movement that there is no way of knowing how far out he has really gone.

Where did it start? Sitting in a classroom, listening to somebody who was supposed to be intellectual, lead him astray from what the Word of God simply says. Do you want to do that? Go ahead, but I can guarantee you, you will lead the most miserable life you ever had in your life if you walk away from what the Bible has to say, not just concerning Jesus but whatever it says. If you ever add anything to it or take anything away from it, you have just done yourself the biggest injustice you have ever done in your life. You must stand, not on what I say; you must stand on what God says.

John says, "Listen, I told you. This is how it all got started. It hasn't changed any from the very beginning. We saw and we heard. We perceived, we understood, we handled Him with our hands, and we proclaimed it to you. Now we write these things to you so that your joy might be made complete. Don't listen to them."

This is a great book. If we are not documented on what salvation is by the time we finish, it will be a great time just to get saved. This thing is going to take us from A to Z in what justification is and what a Christian is.

1 John 1:5-10

Evidence of Christianity

Dr. Wayne Barber

If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Sad to say, there are a lot of people whose walk and talk don't line up.

We are going to pick up in 1 John 1:5, but I would like to back up with you as we feel the flow of what John is doing. Verse 1 says, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard [John is speaking of himself and the apostles], what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life – and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write, so that our joy [or rather it should be, your joy] may be made complete."

Now pick up in verse 5:

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

That is the whole first chapter, as John begins to introduce what he is about to say. The term "darkness" is found in 1 John several times. I want to make sure we understand what it means. It is found in 1 John 1:5-6, and in 2:8-9, 11. There are two different words used for darkness. The first word is in verse 5. It is the word *skotia*. In verse 6 it is the word *skotos*.

Now if you look in a Greek lexicon, you are going to find in verse 5 it says *skotia* means darkness. **Skotos** (word study) in verse 6 means darkness. That is all they are basically going to say about it. But if you will do your homework, run both words through the New Testament, you will discover that there is a significant difference in verses 5 and 6. *Skotia* is the word John uses 98% of the

time in both his gospel and his epistles. Skotos is rarely used and in fact, it is only used by John in 1 John 1:6 and in John 3:19.

Let me show you the difference. The word in 1Jn 1:5, skotia, means the result of darkness. If I walk outside in the darkness and fall over a stump and break my leg, I have been out in the darkness. But I have suffered the consequence of being in that darkness. The word skotos in 1Jn 1:6 means the essence of darkness itself.

Let's look over in John 3:19. I want you to see what this darkness is. It is important to realize what John is saying here. Why does he bring up the word "darkness" and why does he contrast it with light? He is dealing with false doctrine. Any false doctrine is darkness. It is clear here that darkness is the environment in which men seek to hide their sin.

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness." This is not the consequence of the darkness because they haven't realized that yet, but they love the essence of darkness. They love the darkness "rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 says,

For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed.

So we see that darkness, skotos, is something that hides a man's sin. He likes it because no one knows what is going on in the darkness. But Jesus is the light, and when Jesus comes into a man's life, He turns on the light and exposes what is going on. That is why men would not respond to the light. That is the judgment that has come into the world.

If you will look at our text, 1 John 1:6, we will see a very similar truth that John is bringing out. He says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." "Lie" and "practice" are in the present tense, so they should read "lying" and "practicing." In other words, John is saying, "You can't say you know Christ and seek to go off in the darkness and hide your sin. You cannot do that and claim to be a believer."

As I have been studying this is what is coming to me. Darkness seems to represent false doctrine and its unethical connection to sin. Can I share something with you? If you are not living in the Word of God, if you are not a believer, you already somehow have learned to tolerate sin in your life. Now that doesn't come from the truth because the truth is light. God is light. You cannot come to Him and in any way hide anything from Him. You see, His light will expose you. So an individual who gets off is getting into wrong thinking. Wrong thinking is going to cause wrong living.

In Romans Paul is dealing with is legalism. Legalism is truth that has been perverted and has caused people to think wrongly and is leading them into sin. Antinomianism is another false doctrine he is dealing with. An antinomian is someone who is against the law and feels like you can do anything you want to do. Either way, false doctrine has an unethical connection with sin. When a person thinks wrong, he is going to live wrong.

Now, why does John use light? Because you see, light is truth. It is God's truth. It exposes sin and opens our minds to understand the will and the way of God. A man has a choice to make. Am I going to walk in darkness or am I going to walk in light? The Apostle John is making a contrast between the real believers and the fakes, the ones who if they were put on trial for being a Christian would not be found guilty. There is nothing in their walk to back it up. They have plenty of talk but they don't have any walk.

Ephesians alludes to this. In Ephesians 5 Paul talks about this unethical connection with sin that darkness has. He warns the believers in Ephesus not to go back and live like they used to live. You see, when you come to Christ, you come out of darkness and you come into light. There is no fellowship with darkness and light whatsoever. In Ephesians 5:8 (note) it says, "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." We were the epitome of what darkness is all about before we came to know Christ. It was His light, the light of the gospel that came to us and showed us the wickedness and the error of our ways. The verse continues, "walk as children of light."

What is the fruit of that? Ep 5:9-10 read,

"(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." (see notes Ephesians 5:9; 10)

One of the quickest ways to know if a person loves Christ and is walking in the light is that he seeks every single way that he possibly can to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:11 (note) goes on to say,

"And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness."

You see, darkness, that false thinking, is associated with deeds. But I want you also to see that there is no fruit in them. He didn't say the less fruit, he says the unfruitful deeds of darkness. What is he saying? When you start walking in the darkness and hiding

your sin, the deeds that you do in the darkness will never benefit anybody and all you are doing is bringing destruction to yourself. Ep 5:11 continues,

"but instead even expose them."

How do you expose them? By the way you live. When you live following after the Light, you even expose the evil deeds of those around you. That is why the conflict is there between us and the unbelievers in the world.

Ephesians 5:12 says,

"for it is disgraceful even to speak of the thing which are done by them in secret." (note)

You see, that word "darkness" has the idea of hiding. Nobody knows what I am doing. I like that lifestyle. I will go to church on Sunday morning. I will stand up with the best of them. I'll confess I have fellowship with Jesus. But on Monday through Saturday, I am going to live my own kind of life. I am going to slip off in the darkness and do what I want to do. Those are unfruitful deeds. When you get around people who are living right, they are going to expose you for what you are.

Ephesians 5:13 reads,

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.
(note)

Actually, "that which makes manifest is light" is the better translation.

Look at Ephesians 5:14:

"For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine [His light] on you.'" (note)

Obviously John is saying, as he does in the gospel, Christ is light and when one professes to know Him, everything about their life will be exposed. Everything will be open, and they can walk in the purity of that relationship with Him. We have a choice to make. We either walk in the darkness or we walk in the light.

Okay, let's get to the text in 1Jn 1:5. I wanted you to know some of those things as we enter into it because they are important to John's thinking. If you have ever studied his gospel, then it is easy to come into 1 John because he says so many of these things over and over again in his gospel. 1Jn 1:1-4 tell us that the message of Jesus Christ has not changed. John says from the very beginning it has been so. The beginning he speaks of there is not the same one as in John 1:1. He is speaking about the first time he wrote to them. "Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has come in the flesh to live on this earth, to go to a cross, and to take our sin upon Himself. We saw Him. We heard Him. We beheld Him, and we touched Him. That has not changed."

That drives a nail into that Cerentian heresy. The Cerentian heresy says, "Oh no, Jesus wasn't God." [Gnosticism](#) says you don't even need Jesus to be saved. You can be saved by your knowledge.

John is saying, "You can't be saved except through Jesus Christ." [Gnosticism](#) says, "That is hogwash. Jesus was not the Son of God." So John is methodically, as an apostle, nailing that Cerentian heresy. We saw Him. We heard Him. We beheld Him. The word "beheld" means we saw Him to the point we recognized that He wasn't just a man. He was God in the flesh. We touched Him with our hands, signifying even after He resurrected they were able to be around Him and to touch Him and to realize He had flesh and bones, that He didn't just resurrect spiritually. He resurrected bodily.

John is about to drive another nail into that heresy. Look at what he says in verse 5: "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." In God, there is no consequence of sin. Let me work my way through the verse. I don't think you have seen it yet. When you see it you are going to say, "That is what he is saying!"

First of all, it is in the perfect tense. Perfect tense means we have heard Him. We have heard Him back here. Perfect tense also means a state of something. In other words, we heard it and we are hearing it and it has not changed even until now. That is the beauty of the perfect tense. It is used a lot in 1 John. Again he is just reinforcing the fact that nothing has changed. "Nothing has changed. Quit listening to these false teachers who are among you."

What is the message? There is no darkness in God. There is no consequence of sin in God. What does that tell us? That tells us that the Gnostics are off the wall because you see, they couldn't understand. All flesh is evil. So how could God have a body? If He had a body that makes God evil. Therefore, Jesus could not have been the Son of God. God who is perfect and holy would never inhabit a body that was evil. John, led of the Holy Spirit of God, uses words that give us a picture. To make his point clearer he says, "In Him there is no darkness." There are two words for "no" in the Greek. One means in a relative sense, but the other one means absolutely never, of any kind. That is the word he uses here. No, there were none, no propensity to sin, no sin nature, nothing to do with sin. There was no consequence of sin whatsoever in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:12 (note) threw all of the Gnostics in Rome. As a matter of fact, if anybody in Asia Minor knew what was written to the Romans they would have been confused. Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned – for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." What he is saying is, "By one man, Adam, sin came to all men." Can you see the confusion the people went through? They probably said, "You are telling me God is a man. Well, if he is a man and all men are under sin, then He had to have a body of sin. It couldn't have been Jesus."

In Romans 8:20 (note) and Ro 8:22 (note) Paul talks about the suffering, the consequence of Adam's sin that spread to all men. Look in Romans 8:20 and Ro 8:22. It says,

For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation [that is nature itself] groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

That is the sphere of what Adam's sin has affected. It affected all men, and all men are now under sin and because they are under sin, the law came to condemn them all and to wait to lead them unto grace.

Not only were men under sin, but the created order was under sin also. We have in nature things that are suffering and groaning, waiting until the revelation of the sons of God. You know it says the rocks will cry out and the trees will praise Him. I read an article that said when trees are starving for lack of water, they make a chirping sound that no human ear can hear. But the roaches and the bugs that prey on them hear it and they are drawn to those trees to eat them. That little chirping noise is going on and human ears cannot hear it. There is a groaning going on in creation, folks.

So you can understand how the Gnostic heresy got started. You can understand how it could have been out of sincerity. Somebody said, "Hey, flesh is evil. Adam sinned. All men born of Adam are under sin. How could God, the God-man, Jesus Christ, be the Son of God?" But here is what Paul is trying to bring out. In all of us there is the consequence of Adam's sin. Would you not agree with that? We are going to die. Death is the first consequence. We know we are going to die. And thank God, He has conquered death but we are still going to die unless He comes between now and then. Some people say, "Oh no, the more righteous you are, you can live forever." Nobody ever says that after they turn 40. There is a consequence to sin. We are going to die. Everyone of us are under that consequence. Thank God, He took the curse off of us, but we are all under the consequence.

I want to tell you something, Jesus was not under that curse. There was something unique about His body that you may have overlooked. The moment I am born I start to die. Paul says the outer man is decaying. Your body decays. You see, at death our spirit goes on to be with the Lord, but our body is still subjected and as a result of that, it continues to decay.

Now I don't like to talk about that. You are probably thinking, "Why are you pulling that out?" That is important. The body of Jesus Christ could not decay. You have got to understand something. There is no consequence of darkness, skotia, in the Lord Jesus. Yes, He had a body. John was saying, "You Cerentians, I want to tell you something. He did come in the body of flesh, but that body was not like your body. When Satan came to tempt Him, there was nothing in Him that he could draw out of Him." Do you remember how John says it the Gospel of John?

Have you ever taken a magnet and put it over a tool box? It is amazing. You put that magnet over the tool box and everything in that tool box that responds to that magnet will just go right up to it. But if you have something in there that has some kind of alloy in it, something in it that doesn't respond to that magnet, it just sits there. Satan holds his magnet over you or over me. This afternoon I was fighting with my computer. I mean I was upset! Satan put that magnet over me and my flesh responded to it! Why did it respond to it? Because I am still in my body and I suffer the consequences of Adam's sin. Skotia means no consequence of darkness. In the Lord Jesus Christ was no consequence.

Look in Psalms 16. If the Lord Jesus hadn't wanted to die, He wouldn't have. He dismissed His own spirit from His body when He was on the cross. No man can take His life. He gave it willingly. That is the gospel, the good news. That is God. That is not a man. The Gnostics said, "Jesus is just simply the son of Joseph." No, He was God! He always has been God. He didn't enter into flesh. John 1:14 says He became flesh. Study the difference between the two. He didn't find him a man and enter into him. He was born of a virgin. He became flesh.

Psalm 16:8 says, "I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely." This is pointing at the Lord Jesus. You ask, "How do you know?" Look at Ps 16:10: "For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol." Do you know what Sheol was? That was where the departed spirits went in the Old Testament. Do you know what it is called in the New Testament? Hades. So often translators put "hell" in there, and it is not the right translation.

Hades had two compartments to it. Remember Lazarus and the rich man? (see Lu 16:19, 20, 21, 22, **23 [Hades]**, Lk 16:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31) One went into Abraham's bosom and one went to a place of torment. The rich man wouldn't argue with you that it wasn't hell, but it wasn't the literal hell we talk about. It is torment. It is the absence of God. But hell is being reserved for the last of the thousand years when the first ones will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Hades (Hebrew equivalent used in the OT = **Sheol**) is a very important word to know. There were two compartments for those who died prior to the Cross. What did Jesus do when He went to the cross? After He died on the cross, He went in there and took those out of Abraham's bosom and took them right up into heaven. So now when we die, we don't go to Abraham's bosom, we go into the presence of Jesus Himself.

The Psalmist goes on, "For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay." Whew! That's it! Now do you think that is important? In **Acts 2:27 [Hades]**, Ac 2:26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 Peter brings it out again in his message. It is trying to tell us something. He is not just a man like we know of men. Yes, He had a body of human flesh. He is the God-man, 100% man, 100% God, but He had no nature or propensity to sin, for in Him was no darkness at all, no consequence of darkness at all. That is almost a final blow to that Cerentian heresy.

Now you ask yourself, "I wonder why John is doing all this?" We know he is refuting their doctrine. But wait a minute, that doctrine has gotten into the church. And because it has gotten into the church, you've got some believers sitting around who never study anything saying, "Golly, I didn't know that." They are getting their attention and are beginning to lead them astray. So the Apostle John begins in verse 6 and goes all the way through the book contrasting what people say and what they live as being two different things. He is saying, "These are Christians. These aren't."

Do you want to know what a Christian is?

I am going to call them forth and put them on the witness stand and it won't be by what they say, it will definitely be by how they live. Look at 1Jn 1:6. In verses 1Jn 1:6-10 he has three false statements, then he has the truth that contrasts that and he shows you the evidence that will prove you to be guilty if you claim to be a child of God.

False statement number one is found in verse 6: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Since there is no darkness in Him and we profess to have fellowship with Him, attached to Him, in Him and He in us as John says in his gospel, you can immediately begin to see where he is headed. You can't tolerate sin in any way in a habitual way and claim to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Oh yes, you will still deal with sin. Before you became a Christian you chased it. After you become a Christian it chases you. You will still sin. That is what chapter 2 is all about. However, when you find a Christian living in darkness (present tense), hiding under darkness, seeking to think nobody knows what he is doing and if he lives habitually that way, John has something to say about him. False doctrine has that unethical connection with sin. Truth has nothing to do with sin, nothing. Light has nothing to do with sin.

First of all he says, "If we say." The little word "if" is a suppositional conjunction. There are different words for "if." There is *ea*, and there is *ean*. *Ean* is used here. *Ean* means "suppose." It is almost like saying, "If Superman walked in the back door, let's just suppose, okay." What John is saying is, "In the future let's just suppose that some of you in the congregation I am writing to would say that you have fellowship with Him and yet there is something about your lifestyle that doesn't back it up."

Here we have the word "fellowship" again. What does this mean? There are two groups of thinking here. I will give you both of them and let you decide for yourself. On one side the word "fellowship" does not mean relationship. It's like when I forgot and left the bait in my Daddy's car on a hot day in August. We had fished all night for catfish. I forgot and left it in the car all day. He came home from work that afternoon, got off the bus and could smell it from the corner. I had a relationship with my Father, but the fellowship was deeply strained! As a matter of fact, when we sold that car it still smelled like that bait.

Some people say the word "fellowship" is a different word than the word "relationship." They say John is simply trying to say you can't walk in intimacy with God if you are consistently tolerating sin in your life. That is what some say. But others say, "Now wait a minute, fellowship here is like in verse 3. It says if you want fellowship with us, you are first of all going to have to find it with the Father. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son. What he is saying is, 'We have intimacy with the Father through His Son and until you come to know Him through His Son, you can't have intimacy with us.'" So it is a matter of relationship even though it is the word "fellowship." They say the word "fellowship" means relationship in the sense of, do you know Him at all?

I personally am going to have to side with the second. I believe what he is doing is drawing a contrast. I don't think he is talking right here to the fact that believers can go off and live consistently in sin and then claim to have a relationship, just no fellowship at the

time. Now certainly my fellowship is strained when sin gets into my life. But we are talking about habitual, present tense, lifestyle of sin. That would agree with chapter 3 which says a man who claims to know Christ cannot sin. But he says it in the present tense, he cannot habitually sin. So you really have to make up your mind. I am not going to force my opinion on you, but you can go two different ways. I think truth has its beauty on both sides of it if you will look at it. As a Christian, if I do sin my fellowship is ruined. But I can't consistently habitually live in sin. That is the thing I want you to see. I think he talks of fellowship here as a relationship with the Father because it would line up with the context.

2Corinthians 5:17 says,

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."

Do you know what that word "new" is? It is the same word used for new covenant, New Testament. It is the word *kainos*. *Kainos* means absolutely, qualitatively brand new, never seen before. What did you use to do? You lived in darkness. You hid your sin under darkness. That is the judgment that has come into the world. What happened when light came into your life? You exposed yourself to the light, you were exposed to the light, the light exposed you and you saw yourself as a sinner. You came out of the darkness. Ephesians says you were once darkness, now you have been made light. How can a person who has been made light go back and consistently live habitually in darkness? John is saying you can't do that.

"Well," you might say, "if that is the case, there are a lot of people who have joined the church who aren't saved." That is what I am saying. Yes, salvation is by grace, but you've got to understand grace. You've got to make up your own mind. You say, "Well, there are two sides to argument." There really are. You can find both sides of it. But I think when you stay in the book of 1 John all the way through you are going to see he is drawing a contrast between those who know Christ and those who don't know Christ. That is the whole reason for writing, remember. 1Jn 5:13 says,

These things I have written... that you may know that you have eternal life.

Well, look at the contrast in 1Jn 1:7. That is why I think that he is talking about relationships, not just an intimacy. Verse 7 says, "but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." What does he mean, "walk in the light?" I think by now the picture should be clear for you. Darkness hides sin. Walk in the light. What does it do? It exposes sin. What is there going to be in the light? There is going to be confession of sin. I heard a man not long ago say on the radio, "We are coming into a level of maturity to where you don't have to confess sin anymore. Confess your righteousness and what you say shall be so." Huh? That's ridiculous. As a matter of fact, the closer you get to God the more you are going to want to confess sin. Do you know why? He is Light. He is not a light. He is not like light. He is Light. Nobody turned Him on and nobody can turn Him off. He is perpetual Light. When I come to Him and draw near to Him, as James says, the first thing that happens is, He exposes anything that has been hidden in my life. You can't say that you don't confess sin anymore if you are a believer. You've got to confess sin. Do you know what "confess" means? It is the word *homologeō*. It means you agree with God. "Yes sir, God, you are exactly right. That is sin in my life." It is to say the same thing. That is what it means.

The word "sin" means I have missed the mark. It is like an archer pulling an arrow back and shooting at a target and missing it. That is sin. Hey, now is He in the Light. He can't get out of it. I mean, He is Light. He is wrapped up in it. He can't remove Himself from it. If you will walk in the Light as He is in the Light. If you will determine in your life, I am going to stay in that Light, then something is going to be seen about your life.

The first signal of living that way is we will have fellowship one with another. Ephesians 4:3 (note) says,

"Preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Nowhere does it say to produce it; it says to preserve it. What is peace? Peace means to walk in relationships that have nothing in between them that will cause friction, with God first and then with man. As we walk that way, we are going to have fellowship with one another.

That word "fellowship" is more than cookies and ice cream. It is the intimate spiritual participation in the things of God. We can share together. That is the way it works. I don't have to know your name. You don't have to come to my house; I don't have to come to yours. That is not the way you produce it. You preserve it. You don't produce it. That is the first signal. How do you know people who have their talk matched up with their walk? Watch them fellowship with others who are the same way. Watch them. There is no "Did you hear what I heard?" Forget that. They have stepped off somewhere. It is in the Light.

The second thing is he says, "and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Now explain that to me. I have heard people say, "Well, when I confess this sin, He covers all the other ones I haven't confessed yet." Well, I am sure He does that. But do you think that is what he means? How do I even know He is doing that, then. I don't even know what I've done, so how do I know if He is cleansing me of it? I think it means something else and I want to show you.

Look over in Hebrews 9:14 (note). I think what he is talking about here is that He clears our consciences of guilt and moral defilement. Are you laden down with guilt for your past? He cleanses that. He washes you. Oh! Hebrews 9:14 reads,

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Look in Hebrews 10:2 (note)

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

He is talking about the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Look in Heb 10:22 (note):

let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Do you know what the beautiful thing is? You don't walk around laden down with guilt all the time when you walk in the Light as He is in the Light. Why? Because you are dealing with sin as He brings it up in your life and He is washing out all that old guilt and moral defilement in your life.

How many people today are laden down with guilt for the sins of their past and don't know that His blood has cleansed them once and daily continues to keep them cleansed from the guilt and the moral defilement of sin? One of the greatest things in my life was to realize that the strength of sin is the law. The power of sin is the law. Why is it powerful? To condemn me. But He has set me free from the power of sin which means when I walk in the Light as He is in the Light, He frees me from not just the sin held against me, but He frees me from the guilt. Oh, there are consequences, yes. But He gives me mercy to bear up under them. I don't have to walk around, my head hung every day, with guilt hanging all over me as He cleanses me with His blood. You see, a lot of people talk it but who are the ones who walk it? If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? If we say we have fellowship with Him but we live in darkness, we are lying [present tense] and we are not doing the truth [present tense]. We are not living a life that has anything to do with the truth. I think He just separated the ones who are and the ones who aren't.

Isn't it good to be clean from sin? It is just amazing when you are clean. If you are a Christian and you are trying to hide sin in your life, the blood just stopped cleansing you of that guilt and moral defilement. But if you will come to the Light, it exposes you.

1 John 1:8-10

The Believer and Sin - Part 1

Dr. Wayne Barber

There are a lot of people who think that now that they are believers they don't have to deal with sin any more. As a matter of fact, many want to blame other people or other things. I heard Vance Havner tell the story of a lady who walked into a psychiatrist's office with a strip of bacon on one ear and a strip of bacon on the other ear and a fried egg on her head. She looked at the doctor and said, "Doctor, I am here to talk to you about my husband. He has a real problem." That is exactly the way most people are. If there is a problem, it is somebody else's fault. We never seem to look within and understand that we never, ever outgrow the fact that we are going to have to deal with sin in our life.

The initial message of Jesus Christ found in Mark 1:15 was this. He said, "Repent." Then he said, "and believe." That is not in the aorist tense – aorist means that at a specific point in time, do it – it is in the present imperative. Present tense means repent and keep on repenting. The imperative mood means it is a command. Believe and keep on believing. That was God's message. It is not a one-time repentance. It is the one time, initial coming to know Christ and repenting of our sin, but it is also a daily living in light of the fact that we choose the wrong things and we daily have to repent and change our behavior for Him.

The Apostle Peter preached a message in Acts 2 that has been used by people in the wrong way for so many years. In Acts 2:38 he said, "Repent, and... be baptized." I don't know how many denominations have picked up on that. I know one for sure that says, "Oh, you see, you've got to repent but you have to be baptized before you can be a Christian. Therefore water baptism is what saves you." That is not at all what he is saying there. As a matter of fact, the word "for" also is translated "because of." Are you going to build a doctrine off of that?

Repent (see word study of related noun metanoia). Involved in that word are all the things necessary. Belief is the other side of repentance. They are two sides of the same coin. Repent, be baptized. Being baptized is simply your public witness of what has already taken place in your heart. But Luke puts it in the aorist tense. Aorist tense means "do it". Now what is the difference? Jesus

put it in the present: "Repent and keep on repenting." Peter says, "Repent" and puts it in the aorist. Is there a conflict there? No. Peter is dealing with the initial response. He is dealing with what these people need to do now. Jesus is putting it not only in the now, but in the future. He is saying, "This is the message. You will repent now but you will live repenting the rest of your life because a Christian deals with sin every day that he lives." Confession and repentance are a part of the daily agenda of the life of every believer.

We know that the Apostle John in the book of 1 John is writing to combat the Cerentian heresy. It is a form of [Gnosticism](#). [Gnosticism](#) is a much bigger subject than just what is going on in 1 John. Cerenthus had a certain idea that he was getting into the church. John was writing to combat that.

There were three other tenets about the Cerentian heresy that we haven't talked about yet. First of all they said, "Jesus did not have a body of flesh. Flesh is evil. God inhabited Him when He was baptized and left Him before He was crucified." Then later it changed and another heresy grew out of that which said He was just a ghost and never had a body to start with. Of course, it denied everything about His redemption and why He came to this earth.

Another part of that heresy was they had three different distinct views of sin and it was found in different twists. One of them said that you can claim to be a Christian and still live in sin. You are not responsible for it anymore. You can live like you want to. Paul had a little bit to deal with some of that type of thinking in the book of Romans when he says in chapter 6, "What should we say then? Should we continue in sin that grace should abound? May it never be!" We are dead to sin. But there was this idea in the Gnostic heresy that said that you could continue to live in sin and still claim to be a believer. No way!

Secondly, there was the idea that you could come to a plateau in your life. In other words, if you have been a Christian for 30 years and you have been a pretty good person and you have read your Bible every day and you haven't missed any church, you can come to a level of not even sinning any more. Wouldn't that be wonderful? You wouldn't even have to confess sin any more. You can enter into this echelon of sinless perfection. That was the second twist to how they dealt with sin.

Then there was a third twist and that was the worst one. The third one said we have never sinned to begin with. Somebody else came up with this word "sin." There is no sin. Nobody has sinned. Everybody is a good person, just in the wrong environment type thing. We don't have any sin at all.

Those were three of the twists of the Gnostic heresy back then. Wasn't it the author of Ecclesiastes who said there is nothing new under the sun? In the 21st century we are not dealing with anything new. We are just dealing with something with a different face on it. Maybe at first we think it is new but it is the same old stuff that comes across.

John is writing to combat that. He actually makes the three false statements that they make beginning in verse 6 of 1 John 1, and he finishes those three false statements in verse 10. We looked at the first one last time.

The second false confession is where we are going to start this time. Three times he says, "If we say." Verse 8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." What is he saying here? Well, first of all, the "we have" there is in the present tense. We are in the state of having no sin. In other words, we have reached that place. Spirituality is an attainment. We finally arrived and we don't have to deal with sin anymore. John goes on to say if we say that, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

The word "deceiving" is the word **planao** (word study). We get the word "planet" from it. The idea is, if we are saying this, that we don't have to deal with sin anymore, we are like a planet wandering around. There is no direction in our life. Have you ever noticed people who have problems in their life and they don't want to have to deal with personal sin? It is almost as if they have come beyond that. Something else is the matter but not sin. You can't get them to sit down and realize that sin is the problem. These people never seem to come to any solutions. They never come to any answers. Why? Because they are deceiving themselves by saying they don't have any sin. We have got to understand that sin still is in the life of a believer. A believer has to deal with sin.

Well, he says, "the truth is not in us." There are two words for "not" in the Greek. One is a relative type of word. The other one is the word used here which means absolutely in any shape or form the truth is not in them. Now, there are a lot of people in our time who still echo some of these things. They say, "Hey, I don't have to deal with sin." As a matter of fact, years ago I almost got caught up in a heresy that said you don't confess sin any more, you confess who you are in Jesus. If you confess who you are in Jesus, then whatever you confess will be so in your life. I would get up in the morning and get in the shower and confess who I was in Jesus. Man, I had that thing down. "I have been made righteous. I am a child of God. I am seated in the heavenlies." I could go through that thing.

I think that is very critical for us to understand. We need to know those things. But folks, just confessing our righteousness doesn't mean we have attained it. Paul didn't tell Timothy to confess it. He said pursue it. There is a big difference. As soon as I got out of the shower and got dressed, I said, "Oh God, I have been made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. And, oh God, I am

seated in the heavenlies with You. I will not have a lustful thought today." That lasted about 30 seconds.

What are we doing when we think that we can arrive? Spirituality is not an arrival. Spirituality is a pursuit. It's a day by day pursuit. We are going to deal with sin until the day Jesus comes and glorifies us. Then we will know a presence apart from the penalty, the power and the presence of sin. We are going to be with Him forever and won't have to deal with it anymore.

The Gnostics said they could reach this spiritual pentacle. But a believer must deal with sin. Now let me explain something to you. When I got saved I got a new heart. I really did. Go back and study the covenant. It tells us in Ezekiel that we are going to get a new heart. What does that mean? It means that His Spirit has come to live in my spirit. Because of that new heart that is in me, I can't pursue sin habitually anymore. Oh, I may make some stupid choices, but I can't pursue it. I can't live it habitually anymore. Why? Because I have the nature of God inside of me.

But here is the enigma. I still have a fallen body and James says that my fallen body has lust in it. The problem with the lust of my flesh is they continue to gravitate towards that which is not righteous. Whenever the temptation comes, I had better make sure I understand the battle because my flesh always pulls me this way and my spirit is pulling me that way. That is the struggle Galatians 5 is talking about. Every man is going to have to deal with sin. You can never get to a point that you don't deal with sin.

This is so neat to watch in my children when they come to me and say, "Daddy, I've got this problem. I've got that problem." I say, "Yeah, I know. I do, too." They hate to hear that because they are hoping when they get out of college, get married, have children, they can get to a place where they don't have that trouble anymore. No, no. I hate to tell you. You not only have it, it intensifies because the more knowledge you have about that, the more intense that particular problem becomes in your life.

One day I was studying in Galatians 5:16 (see notes Ga 5:16; 5:17). It says if you obey the Spirit you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. Thank God! Man, I jumped up and shouted. Everybody wondered why I was so happy. It didn't say you won't have them, it says you won't fulfill them. Are you a Christian and for some reason you think you have been saved long enough that you shouldn't be bothered by certain things in your walk? Who told you that? You are going to deal with sin until Jesus comes back. Why? Because we have fallen bodies of flesh. Anybody who ever tells you that you will ever get beyond sin, you had better back away from them and get on your knees and pray for them because they are way, way off the mark. You never come to a point that you have somehow gotten beyond sin.

One of my dearest friends came to my house one time. I remember everything he ever said to me, even if it was humorous. He was just like me. That brother confessed sin so many times to me. "Brother Wayne, I am so sorry." I was thinking, "Good night. I thought maybe when I got to your age I would get beyond some of this stuff." But he let the message come home deep to me that you never, ever, ever get beyond sin. When you begin to understand that, it takes all the judgmental garbage out of us. How are you going to point a finger at somebody else when there are three fingers pointing right back at you?

I have thought many times about the prodigal son. I would have been the prodigal son. I mean, that is kind of the way I was when I grew up. I would be the one taking off with my inheritance. But you know what bugs me? It is goody-two shoes out in the fields. He didn't go. The thing that really gets me about him is that when the prodigal son came back, he began to accuse him of spending it on harlots. Oh, come on. Why would he say that? Why would he pick out one thing? I guarantee you he is sitting out there in that field and that is his problem. You see, even though he didn't actually go do it, he was just as guilty as this one is because it is in his heart. Friend, you never get beyond sin! Quit blaming somebody else. You are probably in the same boat.

It is funny how God raised up the Chaldeans in the book of Habakkuk. It shows the Chaldean in each of us, doesn't it? He will always raise up somebody just like you except they are a little bit further down the tube and they will drive you nuts. God is trying to show you the same thing is in your life. Well, enough of that.

Look at the contrast in 1Jn 1:9. He says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Look at the first phrase, "if we confess our sins." The verb "confess" again is in the present tense. Isn't that amazing? "Now wait a minute. I don't like the present tense. That means continual action. I want to confess it once and that's it." Well, for that sin that is fine, but there will be another one and there will be another one and another one. Part of the lifestyle of the believer is dealing with sin. What he is saying here is that the process of confessing our sins is energized each time we do so. If you confess it once, it is a little easier to confess it the next time. When you let that be a practice in your life, you start recognizing what is sin and what is not sin and you start dealing with it. Oh, the healthiness of your mind and your whole spiritual walk before God when you realize you are dealing with sin and you are dealing with flesh.

The verb **homologeō** tells us something (**Ed**: see also word study of related noun **homologia**) . There are a lot of people who say if we confess our sins, all that means is to agree with God. That is what it says. Homo means alike, and logeo means to say. "To say the same thing," is what he is saying. They say, "Well, God, I have sinned. Isn't that what I am supposed to tell you?"

Now wait a minute. Think with me for a second. The very word itself shows you that there is a whole lot more than just agreeing with

God that you have sinned. It means to take upon yourself the same estimate towards that sin that God takes upon it. Number one, how did it happen? It wasn't your brother. It wasn't your sister. You made the choice. Quit blaming anybody else. Once we are saved, we are responsible. We have to deal with individual sins. Listen, we make the choice. That is the first thing. God makes you agree with Him on that. Secondly, that choice you made missed the mark completely. Oh, man, I feel like this is a mirror bouncing right back at me. This is for me, too.

The third thing is how God hates that sin. You see, there are a lot of people who go through the motions of agreeing with God. "Oh yes, God, that is sin I did. Thank you for reminding me. Will you forgive me?" Then they go right on. Oh no. You look at it the way God looks at it and you agree with Him and say the same thing He says about it. He hates it. That is what cost Jesus His life on the cross. When a person comes to the place in their walk that they start taking sin lightly, then they have missed the whole purpose and point of what their Christianity is all about. In other words, we must agree with God, not only that we are responsible for our sins, that we chose to do the sin, but we agree with God in His estimate towards that sin. So built in that, implicit in the word "confess" is the attitude of repentance. The attitude of saying, "God, I am so sick of it. I am so sorry for it. God, I want to turn away from it and I want to turn now to do what You want me to do in that particular area of my life."

One of the places that I failed in so much in my walk in the earlier years and still have some tendencies that way is to confess it without turning away from it. You see, there are a lot of people doing that. In Proverbs it says you are to confess and forsake your sin. That is the repentant attitude. That is taking God's estimate upon that.

I want to tell you something, sin is so deceitful. We sit back so smug as if nothing is wrong in our life. What is wrong with us? If you ever get to the point that you think you have gotten beyond sin, you are not going forward, you are going backward. You are going to deal with it until Jesus comes back. It is a subtle thing. You think you can get out of it because you think that was Class 101 and you've moved to Class 201. There is no Class 201. It is 101 until Jesus comes back. We deal with it every day of our life.

I think part of the thinking of God on this is that the more I confess sin, the more I am able to recognize it the next time. If I don't get in the habit of looking at it, then it can slip in and out of my life and I never even understand what is there.

It goes on to say if you will do that, "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He is faithful. The word is trustworthy. He can be trusted to do what He said He would do. What are you under? What is holding you hostage? I guarantee you it is sin in your life somewhere. He is trustworthy. He will do what He said He will do. Secondly, He is righteous. The word "righteous" there means righteous. I don't know how to explain it any other way. He is who He is. It is not something He does. It is who He is. Paul said in Romans 1 that the gospel, the good news of God, reveals the righteousness of God. If you want to know what He is like, look at what Jesus did. He is the only One you can turn to when you sin. You can't go to a priest. You can't come to church and do better works. You've got to go to the One who is righteous, and the One who is righteous is faithful to do what He said He would do.

It says He will forgive us. The word "forgiveness" is the aorist subjunctive *aphiemi*. The word *aphiemi* is from *apo*, from, and *hiemi*, which means to send, to send away from. "Do you mean to tell me the weight of that sin and the burden of that sin that I have been carrying around with me, the thing that has been holding me hostage so long in my life, do you mean when I confess it with an attitude of repentance that He will do what He said He will do, He will set me free and He will take that burden off of me?" Exactly. As a matter of fact, the picture is in the Old Testament, the High Priest, taking the goat out and putting his hands on the head of the goat and confessing the sins of the people and sending the goat off into the wilderness never to return. The word means to send away. That is what He is doing. He sends it away. Are there any consequences? Yes, there are always consequences. But as far as my fellowship with Him and my right relationship with Him, I am restored. That weight is lifted off of me and then He gives me the mercy to bear up under whatever consequence was there in the first place. Grace deals with sin. Mercy always deals with the consequence.

"To forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The word "cleanse" is the word *katharizo*. It means something was filthy and had to be cleaned because there is a stain there somewhere that had to be cleansed. God wants to clean us up, cleanse us. You say, "Well, He did that at salvation." That is exactly right. But that doesn't mean we don't walk in the muck and the mire of sin every day. That is why we constantly come back to have our feet washed as He told Peter one day. "Peter, you have already had your bath. You just need your feet washed." You see, it is a cleansing. It is a cleansing.

It is wonderful to be clean. All kinds of problems can develop when a person is not clean before God, when he hasn't made a break with sin, when he hasn't repented, when he hasn't taken on that estimate of sin that God wants him to take. You see, part of that cleansing is the guilt. Hebrews 9:14 talks about the guilt and the evil consciousness. Hebrews 10:2 and Hebrews 10:22 has to do with the guilt of sin. I think that is what he is talking about. The penalty of sin has already been paid for. It has been cleansed away. But now it is the guilt of sin.

Proverbs 5:22 (KJV) says a man is bound by the cords of his own sin. We tend to say, "No way! It is not my sin. It is their sin!" God

says, "No way. It is not what they have done to you. It is how you have wrongly reacted to them." A man is bound by the cords of his own sin. All unrighteousness. There is not one single sin that you can commit that God cannot cleanse you from except when you reject the gospel of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit of God and blaspheme Him. There is not much He can do with you then because evidently you don't need Him. But any other sin we commit in our life, God can immediately cleanse us from and it is such a wonderful thing.

One of the things I have discovered is, when you are clean, everybody gets prettier and the grass gets greener and the sky gets bluer. It is just amazing how it changes your whole perception towards life. But if you let sin get into your life, watch the countenance fall. What did God say to Adam in the garden? "Adam, why has your countenance fallen? What is going on here?" There is always an appearance of sin on the outside.

So we see the practice of a believer as contrasted with this wrong doctrine of people saying, "We don't have to deal with sin anymore. It is not our problem. We have been Christians for years and we have graduated out of it."

The third false statement is found in 1Jn 1:10:

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Here is the worst scenario you can possibly have. He changes from that present tense which is in the preceding verse and puts it in the aorist tense which means, "I have never sinned at any point in time in my life, ever. I am not a sinner. All men are created good!" Have you heard this these days? The tense there means that he has never at any time whatsoever sinned. The word "not" is used there. It's the same word for "not" used earlier. "I have not in any way, shape or form ever sinned before in my life." Well, if they haven't sinned, then they have no need for Christ. Is that not correct?

As a matter of fact, he goes on to say that we make Him a liar. What did Jesus say? "I came to die for your sin." You make Him a liar. If you haven't sinned, then you don't need Him. This is the attitude of the lost in our world today. Now listen to what I am about to say. People of the world today believe that our problems are not caused because of sin. They are caused by wrong environment. If you put a child in a wrong environment that is what his problem is. It's bad government. Some people are saying Evangelical Christianity is the root of the problem because they preach against sin and they make everybody feel guilty. That is what is wrong with our society. They say the original Adam was a type for all men. Every man is born good.

I was on a flight recently with this guy. When he found out what I did for a living, he wouldn't let me talk anymore. I asked him what he did and he said, "Well, I am a counselor of juvenile delinquents in the court system... or I have been. I have just changed jobs and I am doing something else." I said, "Oh, is that right? What approach do you take with these kids who are in so much trouble with drugs and everything else?" He said, "Oh, first of all you've got to realize there are no bad kids. All kids are good." Right! Do you know what he is doing? Do you know what he is quoting? That is Freudian psychology. Freud said there is no objective basis for wrong. You cannot track it back to sin. You can put it someplace else but there is never one solitary reason. That is what he said. So many have come out against that.

"So we believe it is the problem of environment," he said. "Get a kid out of that bad environment and you've got a kid who will change." I said, "How long were you doing that?" He said, "Seven years." I said, "How many people did you see change?" "Well," he said, "that is relative." I said, "Wait a minute, I asked you a question. How many kids did you see change?" "Well, many of them got jobs." I said, "Did you see their character change? Did you see their life in any way morally change?" "Well, no, but I mean, come on man, what are you asking us to do?" You see, that is society, folks. Let's move to another neighborhood where it is a little bit nicer and we can be better people. Are you kidding? Flesh is flesh I don't care where you are.

When I was over in Romania all those years, I thought they were the most precious people. I said, "I'll never be the Christian these people are." My friends would try to tell me, "Wayne, you don't understand. Their flesh is just as wicked as your flesh." We got over there in one situation and found out the liberals were arguing against the conservatives. The people at church were having all kinds of problems. They would come for an hour to pray, yes. But it was because they came out of the Greek Orthodox Church which said if you don't come to pray, God will kill you. They don't come because of a love motive. A lot of them came because of the work ethic. They didn't understand the security of the believer. They don't understand grace. That is what our ministry was for so many years over there. What did He teach us? Flesh is flesh wherever you are.

My friends were telling me they have seen people who came out of Romania being critical of Americans going to malls and getting all this materialism. Six months later they were the same way. Why? Because every one of us are descended from one man, Adam and because of Adam, we have our flesh to deal with and sin to reckon with. Thank God for the first Adam, which was not the one in Genesis. It was Jesus. Out of Him we have been born again and we are now spiritual beings with a brand new heart. But we still have that ole body which is plagued with the lust of our flesh. They will eat our lunch if we give them half a change. We will deal with sin. For a person to say I have never sinned is the height of ignorance.

John said, "If you say this, you make Him a liar and His Word is not in us." The "word" there in John's vocabulary refers to the preexistent word, Jesus Christ, and also to all the truth that He gave to you and me. None of that is in him at all, cannot be. Proverbs 28:13 says,

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

We do deal with sin. It is more intense now probably than it was when we first started because the more you know of light, the more it exposes the darkness and the more repentant your heart becomes. That is why Paul says, "I am the chief of all sinners." You see, sin is a very real problem in our life.

Do you know what I am like in my flesh? I am a manipulator. Are you that way? If it is in my flesh, I can manipulate it to make it work for my benefit every time. I am good at it. I have been practicing many years of my life. When I got saved I had been in the ministry for eight years. It helps to have a saved minister! I was in the den on my knees and said, "God, will you show me the filth that is in my life?" I cried for two hours until my nose bled when I saw the filth of me, just me. I have no clue why God would ever let me pastor. It amazes me. Sin is real and don't you ever forget it. Do you have a problem in your life? You might want to track it back there first. Not that you have confessed it, because I think the confession we've heard is a watered down version of what God says. Have you broken from it? And repented of it? That is confession because you have taken upon yourself the same estimate of it God has.

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