

# 1 John 1:3 Commentary

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

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

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 1

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))*

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*  
--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (**click page to enlarge**). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phillips:** We repeat, we really saw and heard what we are now writing to you about. We want you to be with us in this - in this fellowship with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** That which we have seen with discernment and at present is in our mind's eye, and that which we have heard and at present is ringing in our ears, we are reporting also to you, in order that as for you also, you

may be participating jointly in common with us [in our first-hand knowledge of the life of our Lord]. And the fellowship indeed which is ours, is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

- **which we have heard:** 1Jn 1:1 Ac 4:20
- **proclaim:** 1Jn 1:5 Ps 2:7 Ps 22:22 Isa 66:19 Jn 17:25 Ac 13:32,41 20:27 1Co 15:1 Heb 2:12
- **you also:** Ac 2:42 Ro 15:27 Eph 3:6 Php 1:7 2:1 1Ti 6:2 Heb 3:1 1Pe 5:1
- See [Westminster Confession 26.1](#); [Heidelberg Catechism 55](#)
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

#### Related Passages:

Acts 4:20+ for we cannot stop speaking about **what we have seen and heard.**"

### PROCLAMATION OF EAR & EYE WITNESS

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

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

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

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

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

**Kenneth Wuest** paraphrases it "That which we have seen with discernment and at present is in our mind's eye, and that which we have heard and at present is ringing in our ears, we are reporting ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Heard** ([akouo](#)) is in the **perfect tense** which speaks of an abiding effect. It's as if Jesus' words gave him "divine tinnitus," for they remained ringing in his ears. When John wrote this letter, some 60 years had passed since he had last heard the voice of Jesus and yet, the words of His Lord continued to be a vivid truth in his heart!

**THOUGHT** - Imagine that you had heard Jesus speak! Would not His majestic words continue to reverberate and resonate in your mind for the rest of your days on earth? I think they would! May we go to His Word desiring to hear from Him even as John first heard Him. And may this "foretaste" make us long for (and live for) eternity future when we shall have the holy privilege of hearing His voice...forever and ever! Amen!

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

**G G Findlay** feels that "John reiterates **"what we have seen and heard"** not by way of resuming the thread of an interrupted sentence, but striking once more the key-note, on which he plays a further descant. We observe here, at the outset, the peculiar manner of our author. His thought progresses by a kind of spiral movement, returning continually upon itself, but in each revolution advancing to a new point and giving a larger outlook to the idea that it seeks to unfold. ([1 John Commentary](#))

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

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

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

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

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

**We proclaim** ([apaggello](#) - present tense - continually) - **We** in plural speaking for all the apostles. In proclaiming the truth about Christ, John is following the pattern of his Lord. Matthew uses this same verb [apaggello](#) in quoting a Messianic prophecy that Jesus "shall **proclaim** ([apaggello](#)) to the Gentiles." (Mt 12:18+)

**G G Findlay** adds that **proclaim** ([apaggello](#)) "signifies the carrying of tidings or messages from the authentic source: we are the bearers to you of the word we received from Him." ([1 John Commentary](#))

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

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

**Steven Cole** applies the truths of this passage to all saints - John (and some of the other apostles) wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the words that God wanted us to receive. Through these writings (our New Testament), we can enter into the same **fellowship** with God that the apostles enjoyed! If John and the other apostles had not proclaimed the message, we wouldn't know Christ today. The Great Commission that Jesus gave to them applies to us, also. If we don't proclaim to others the authoritative message of the King, how will they know and believe (see Ro 10:14,15)? God's method of imparting eternal life to those who are dead in their sins is through the proclamation of the word of life, the gospel. If you're not proclaiming God's revelation about Jesus Christ by your life and words, you're not experiencing the fullness of true Christianity. ([1 John 1:1-3 The Tests of True Christianity](#))

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They knew what they were talking about. No dreamer, no fanatic, no deceiver since the world began, ever wrote like the author of this Epistle. Every physical sense, every critical faculty of a sound and manly understanding, every honest conviction of the heart, every most searching and fiery test that can try the spirit of man, combine to assure us that the Apostles of Jesus Christ have told us the truth as they knew it about Him, and that things were even as they said and no otherwise. Ay, and God has borne witness to those faithful men through the ages since and put the seal to their testimony, or we should not be reading about these things today. ([1 John Commentary](#))

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**Heard** (191) (**akouo**) means to hear with attention, to hear with the "ear" of the mind, to hear with understanding.

**AKOUO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:37; Jn. 1:40; Jn. 3:8; Jn. 3:29; Jn. 3:32; Jn. 4:1; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:47; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 5:28; Jn. 5:30; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 6:45; Jn. 6:60; Jn. 7:32; Jn. 7:40; Jn. 7:51; Jn. 8:9; Jn. 8:26; Jn. 8:38; Jn. 8:40; Jn. 8:43; Jn. 8:47; Jn. 9:27; Jn. 9:31; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:40; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:8; Jn. 10:16; Jn. 10:20; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 11:4; Jn. 11:6; Jn. 11:20; Jn. 11:29; Jn. 11:41; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 12:12; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:29; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 15:15; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 18:21; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 19:8; Jn. 19:13; Jn. 21:7; 1 Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:5; 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:5; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:14; 1 Jn. 5:15; 2 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:4; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 1:10; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:29; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:6; Rev. 3:13; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 3:22; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 5:13; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:6; Rev. 6:7; Rev. 7:4; Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:13; Rev. 9:16; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 10:4; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 11:12; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 13:9; Rev. 14:2; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:1; Rev. 16:5; Rev. 16:7; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:22; Rev. 18:23; Rev. 19:1; Rev. 19:6; Rev. 21:3; Rev. 22:8; Rev. 22:17; Rev. 22:18

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

**APAGGELLO - 46X/46V - announced(1), declared(1), declaring(3), proclaim(4), report(10), reported(22), take word(1), tell(1), told(3).** Matt. 2:8; Matt. 8:33; Matt. 11:4; Matt. 12:18; Matt. 14:12; Matt. 28:8; Matt.

28:10; Matt. 28:11; Mk. 5:14; Mk. 5:19; Mk. 6:30; Mk. 16:10; Mk. 16:13; Lk. 7:18; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:20; Lk. 8:34; Lk. 8:36; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 13:1; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 18:37; Lk. 24:9; Jn. 16:25; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:25; Acts 11:13; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:27; Acts 16:36; Acts 16:38; Acts 17:30; Acts 22:26; Acts 23:16; Acts 23:17; Acts 23:19; Acts 26:20; Acts 28:21; 1 Co. 14:25; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 2:12; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 1:3

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

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

### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:9+ God is faithful, through whom you were called into **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) **with His Son**, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 13:14+ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) **of the Holy Spirit**, be with you all.

Philippians 2:1+ Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) **of the Spirit**, if any affection and compassion,

Hebrews 12:9-10 (WHAT BELIEVERS SHARE) Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, **so that we may share His holiness.**

## PURPOSE OF PROCLAMATION: PRODUCTION OF FELLOWSHIP

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

*Oh, gift of gifts! oh, grace of grace!  
That God should condescend  
To make my heart His dwelling-place,  
And be my closest Friend!*

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

**You too may have** (present tense - continually possess) **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) **with us** - John desired that his readers might have fellowship with himself and the other apostles who had seen and conversed and had fellowship with Jesus and through Him with the Father. How could others have fellowship with the apostle John? After all they might never see or meet him personally. Clearly, what John is describing is only possible supernaturally. Only as we believe in Jesus Christ Who John historically verifies can we have fellowship with the aged apostle. Christ is the common bond. When we believe we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to light (Col 1:13+), from the dominion of Satan to God (Acts 26:18+) and from our former position in Adam, to our new, eternal position in Christ (cf 1Co 15:22+). In covenant oneness with Christ, all believers share His life, because He is now our life (Col 3:4+) and in so doing we are united with each other in Him. Does that make sense? Anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ cannot possibly have in common this new life in Him.

**Jerry Bridges** (see [his full note below](#)) differentiates between **objective fellowship** which is eternal and unchanging and **subjective fellowship** which is temporal and changeable. He explains it this way -- This **fellowship** is both objective and subjective in nature.

Objectively, it's an unbreakable union with Christ. In this sense, every believer has **fellowship** with Him at all times. This objective aspect is undoubtedly what Paul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 1:9+. In addition, God intends for us to experience and enjoy this **fellowship** with Him as we consciously spend time in His presence. This **subjective aspect of fellowship** is likely what John had in mind in 1 John 1:3. And this is the type of **fellowship** we refer to as **communion**. (**ED: Communion** in secular dictionary = the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level.) Communion is the experience of our union (**ED: "With the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"**). One illustration of this is the marriage relationship. When we marry someone, there's an objective aspect to it—a legal union is formed the moment we say "I do." That's our status, even when we're apart or feel emotionally distant. But subjectively, we can experience a close and warm relationship as we spend time enjoying one another.

**THOUGHT** - Sadly we can experience a distant and cold relationship with our spouse! And sadly this can describe our communion with the Father and the Son! But as the old saying goes "If we don't feel close to God, guess who moved?" That's rhetorical of course! Our objective fellowship is unchanged and can never be broken, but our subjective fellowship can be changed and impaired as illustrated by the church at Ephesus to whom Jesus declared "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." (Rev 2:4+) Are you as convicted as I am as I write these words?

**Hiebert** comments on "**you too**" writing that "John's proclamation to his readers has a clear intended result horizontally, "that you also may have fellowship with us". The words "you also (too)" suggest that though the readers did not have the same personal experience with the incarnate Christ that the apostles had, yet they could experience the same spiritual fellowship with them." (Online [An Exposition of 1 John 1:1-4](#)- excellent)

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

**Have** ([echo](#)) means to possess and in the **present tense** implies a continual state of **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)).

*Fellowship is the crowning purpose of God's revelation  
There is nothing higher than this, for man's life finds  
its complete realisation in union and communion with God.*  
-- **W H Griffith-Thomas** ([see explanation](#))

John's point is that his readers by continuing to adhere to the full truth in Christ could continue to enjoy the full fruit of the revelation (the fruit being fellowship). Remember that false teachers were on the prowl and their lies and falsehoods would have the effect of disturbing the believer's fellowship with one another and with God the Father and Son. John was anxious that his readers would not allow the false teachers to mar or disrupt their mutual fellowship by perverting the truth about Jesus Christ. It should be understood that a believer's fellowship with God is permanent and cannot be lost. While we can sin and experience a loss of intimacy and a sense of communion with God, we are still in **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) with Him because that is our position in Christ. Personally I had difficulty with this thought which is why I have a longer discussion of the question "Can Fellowship with God be Altered?"

**THOUGHT** - The application for believers today is to "stay close" to the Word of Truth so that you might be able to discern error ("Be a Berean" = Acts 17:11+, Heb 5:14+), for there is error that is pawned off as "spiritual." As an aside, one of the best ways to become a Berean and arm yourself against false teaching which is rampant in our day is to learn and practice the skill of **inductive Bible study**.

**Marvin Vincent** comments on the verb **have** (present tense - continually possess) **fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) explaining that "it expresses the enjoyment or realization of fellowship, as compared with the mere fact of fellowship....This form of expression occurs frequently in the New Testament, to denote the possession or experience of virtues, sensations, desires, emotions, intellectual or spiritual faculties, faults, or defects. It is stronger than the verb which expresses any one of these. For instance, *to have faith* is stronger than *to believe*; *to have life*, than *the act of living*. It expresses a distinct, personal realization of the virtue or fault or sentiment in question. ([Vincent - Word Studies](#))

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

[Click here](#) to see James Smith's seven part description of our fellowship with God's Son.

*The whole purpose of the Christian message can be summarized in a single word—fellowship.*

-- Daniel Rowlands, Welsh revivalist

([see explanation](#))

**Hiebert** emphasizes that "The nature of what is mutually shared molds the nature of the group. Here, as in Acts 2:42+, the intimate bond of **fellowship** that unites the group is their common faith in Christ, based on the apostolic message. By its very nature the new life in Christ creates and stimulates the desire for such **fellowship**. The Christian life is a call not for isolation but for active participation with other believers in this new life." (Online [An Exposition of 1 John 1:1-4](#)- excellent)

Acts 2:42+ They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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

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

**THOUGHT** - When one considers the secular Greek use of **koinonia** to describe the marriage, one begins to get a glimmer of the incredible privilege we as finite believers have to be in communion with the infinitely holy God, Father, Son and Spirit. Glory!

Oh Lord, open our eyes to the breadth and length and height and depth of this incredible truth, the unsearchable riches of the truth of our intimate sharing of the life of the Almighty might motivate us to live holy lives for the glory of the Lamb in a world which has gone "AWOL" from God! Amen.

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

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

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

**Comment:** Peter is not saying believers become "little gods" but he is saying that we are sharers in His nature. As new creatures in Christ we have His Spirit within us and we are in the process of sanctification, growing in conformity to Christ (2Co 3:18+), with the hope (hope sure, not hope so = assurance) that one day in glory we will be like Him (1Jn 3:2+).

**Marvin Vincent** writes that "The true life in man, which comes through the acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, consists in **fellowship** with God and with man. ([Vincent - Word Studies](#))

**The Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words** adds that "The Father and Son have enjoyed (PERFECT) communion with each other since before the creation of the world. When Jesus entered into time, His **fellowship** with the Father also entered into time. During the days of His ministry on earth, Jesus was introducing the Father to the disciples and initiating them into this **fellowship**. The unique **fellowship** between God and Jesus began in eternity (**ED**: I SUBMIT IT ACTUALLY NEVER HAD A BEGINNING - IT SIMPLY ALWAYS WAS!), was manifested in time through the incarnation of Jesus, was introduced to the apostles, and then introduced to each and every believer through indwelling of the Holy Spirit (2Cor 13:14+; Phil 2:1+). (BORROW [Holman treasury of key Bible words](#))

Note that **fellowship** in Scripture does not refer to a social gatherings which is what many think of today as "fellowship." **Koinonia** is translated *sharing* in 1 Cor 10:16+ and as *partnership* in 2Cor 6:14+ which helps us discern the basic meaning is that of a "joint participation in things held in common." The amazing truth in John's passage is that the fellowship we can have with the Father through the Son is also the same fellowship we, as believers, can have with one another. Although John does not use **koinonia** in

his Gospel, he does speak of the believer's oneness and unity, as in Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 - Jesus prays for oneness and unity which is essentially synonymous with fellowship between God and man and men with other men...

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

(Jesus prays for believers) **that they may all be one**; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. (Jn 17:21+)

**Comment:** Can you see the concept of fellowship in this passage? Remember the root idea is "koinos" meaning having something in common.

And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; **that they may be one, just as We are one**; 23 I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in **unity**, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. (Jn 17:22, 23+)

**Comment:** Note here the high and holy purpose of our oneness with the Father and the Son and each other - **that the world may know!**

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

I like [Pastor Chuck Smith's explanation](#) of John's purpose for sharing this truth about Christ...

That you might have fellowship with us.

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

- a. Racial barriers. "Neither Jew nor Greek."
- b. Social barriers. "Bond or free."
- c. Sexual barriers. "Male or female."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Jesus came to change all of this.

- a. Every person is of inestimable value to Jesus. (1) The poor as well as the rich. "Hath not God chosen

the poor of this world rich in faith?" (2) The Aborigine as well as much as the cosmopolitan. (3) The women as well as the men. b. He has put us all on one plain (Ed: "The foot of the Cross.").

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

*Be much with those who are much with God.*

*Walk with those who walk with God*

-- William Dyer

**John Stott** explains that the believer's **fellowship** is "that common participation in the grace of God, the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit which is the spiritual birthright of all Christian believers. It is their common possession of life -- one with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which makes them one. (BORROW [The Epistles of John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Mark Water** - Fellowship with God has been called "walking with God." Enoch is perhaps the most striking example of this. "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away" Genesis 5:24+ (Heb 11:5+). ([Christian Living Made Simple - Page 25](#))

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

**William James** had an interesting quote stating that "Whenever two people meet there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is."

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

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

**KOINONIA - 19X/17V - contribution(2), fellowship(12), participation(2), sharing(3).** Acts 2:42; Rom. 15:26; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 13:14; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 2:1; Phil. 3:10; Phile 1:6; Heb. 13:16; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:7

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John Wesley. - I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole Church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my mission field.

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Don Graham - In the fall of the year, Linda, a young woman, was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta to the Yukon. Linda didn't know you don't travel to Whitehorse alone in a rundown Honda Civic, so she set off where only four-wheel drives normally venture. The first evening she found a room in the mountains near a summit and asked for a 5 A.M. wakeup call so she could get an early start. She couldn't understand why the clerk looked surprised at that request, but as she awoke to early-morning fog shrouding the mountain tops, she understood. Not wanting to look foolish, she got up and went to breakfast. Two truckers invited Linda to join them, and since the place was so small, she felt obliged. "Where are you headed?" one of the truckers

asked. 'Whitehorse'

"In that little Civic? No way! This pass is dangerous in weather like this." "Well, I'm determined to try," was Linda's gutsy, if not very informed, response. "Then I guess we're just going to have to hug you," the trucker suggested. Linda drew back. "There's no way I'm going to let you touch me!"

"Not like THAT!" the truckers chuckled. "We'll put one truck in front of you and one in the rear. In that way, we'll get you through the mountains." All that foggy morning Linda followed the two red dots in front of her and had the reassurance of a big escort behind as they made their way safely through the mountains. Caught in the fog in our dangerous passage through life, we need to be "hugged." With fellow Christians who know the way and can lead safely ahead of us, and with others behind, gently encouraging us along, we, too, can pass safely.

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*We must know the reality of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ before we can know the reality of fellowship with each other in our common relationship to God*

**James Packer** - What is meant by fellowship in this verse (Acts 2:42)? Gossip? Cups of tea? Tours? No. What is being referred to is something of a quite different order and on a quite different level. "They met constantly to hear the apostles teach, and to share the common life, and break bread and to pray. A sense of awe was everywhere. All whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common. With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the temple, and, breaking bread in private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy as they praised God" (Acts 2:42-47, New English Bible). That is fellowship as the new Testament understands it, and there is clearly a world of difference between that and mere social activities.

The Greek word for **fellowship** comes from a root meaning common or shared. So fellowship means common participation in something either by giving what you have to the other person or receiving what he or she has. Give and take is the essence of fellowship, and give and take must be the way of fellowship in the common life of the body of Christ.

Christian fellowship is two-dimensional, and it has to be vertical before it can be horizontal. We must know the reality of fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ before we can know the reality of fellowship with each other in our common relationship to God (1 John 1:3). The person who is not in fellowship with the Father and the Son is no Christian at all, and so cannot share with Christians the realities of their fellowship.

[Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986.](#) (BORROW)

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Christianity Today, March 18, 1988 - Fellowship in the N.T. basically means sharing and self-sacrifice with other believers. As N.T. scholar J.R. McRay has noted, "Fellowship in the early church was not based on uniformity of thought and practice, except where limits of immorality or rejection of the confession of Christ were involved."

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**J.D. Morris** - Nowhere in the N.T. do any of the Greek words translated "fellowship" imply fun times. Rather, they talk of, for example, "The fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (II Corinthians 8:4) as sacrificial service and financial aid. (See for example, I Timothy 6:18). Elsewhere, Paul was thankful for the Philippian believers' "fellowship in the gospel" (Philippians 1:5), for he knew that "inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers (same word as fellowship) of my grace" (Philippians 1:7). This sort of fellowship may even bring persecution. We are to emulate Christ's humility and self-sacrificial love (Philippians 2:5-8) through the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil 2:1). In some way known only partially to us, we have the privilege of knowing "the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:10), and even the communion (i.e. fellowship) of the blood...and body of Christ" (I Corinthians 10:16).

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God's desire is that we learn from Jesus' example of humility to learn to serve others like Jesus.

Illustration - A farmer was out plowing his field one spring morning. The spring thaw had just occurred and there were many muddy valleys in the field. Through one particularly wet place his tractor became stuck in the mud. The harder he tried, the deeper he became stuck. Finally, he walked over to his neighbor's to ask for help. The neighbor came over and looked at the situation. He shook his head, and then said, "It doesn't look good, but I tell you what. I'll give it a try pulling you out. But if we don't get it out, I'll come sit in the mud with ya!" Jesus was humble enough to "sit in the mud" with us, and we ought to learn to do the same for others.

**FELLOWSHIP WITH  
ONE ANOTHER**

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

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

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

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

Fellowship with one another based on true fellowship with God is the core of true Christian unity. John did not advocate "fellowship" with the heretics. These men, no doubt, still claimed to believe in Jesus, but just not in the same way that the apostles understood things. Even though John emphasizes love, he never encourages love and fellowship with these heretics. Quite the opposite, he makes it clear that we should not welcome them even with a warm greeting. To do so would be to participate in their evil deeds (2 John 10, 11).

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

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

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

**(2) True fellowship with God is based on the truth that God has revealed about His Son(1Jn 1:3)....**

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

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

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

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

that would create distance or divide them.

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

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

### (3) True fellowship with one another and with God is the source of true joy.

As we saw last time, the original text (1Jn 1:4) probably read "**our joy**," not "your joy." But both are true. When a sinner comes to Christ, it brings great joy to those who already know Christ, but it also brings great joy to the sinner who is saved. And as our fellow-ship with God and with one another deepens, the joy deepens. In commenting on the fact that God has given us eternal life, Calvin exclaims (ibid., p. 157), "But if we consider how miserable and horrible a condition death is, and also what is the kingdom and the glory of immortality, we shall perceive that there is something here more magnificent than what can be expressed in any words." (ED: See Findlay's note below for an eloquent attempt to express this great truth in words.) ([True Fellowship 1 John 1:3-4](#))

## "A GREAT SECRET" A NEW DIVINE FELLOWSHIP FOR MEN

George G Findlay writes...

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

**"That you also may have fellowship with us."**

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

**"These things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled."**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, we have fellowship with God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is God’s; but He is ours as well! God has told us what He thinks about His Son, and wishes us to think with Him. Showing Him to the world, He says: “This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am ever well pleased.” (Mt 3:17, 17:5, Mk 9:7, 35, 2Pe 1:17) And we agree to that: we are well pleased with Him too! We solemnly accept the testimony of God concerning His Son. Then we are at one with God in respect to Christ. And all harmony and peace centre there. “The Father Himself loveth you,” said Jesus to His disciples, “because you have loved Me, and believed that I came out from the Father.” In Him God is reconciling the world to Himself. Only when we think aright of Christ, and are rightly disposed toward Him, can we have fellowship with each other, and work together with God for the world’s redemption. ([1 John Commentary](#))

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

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

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

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

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

### Robert Neighbour - One in Fellowshiping Saints

"Thus saith the High and Lofty One, I will dwell with him" (Isa. 57:15).

#### 1. The Father Fellowships Saints

"Our fellowship is with the Father" (1 John 1:3).

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the promise that the Father would come in and take up His abode with us; this is exactly what the Father does. If God is Father, His sons have the right of approach unto Him. For this cause we may draw nigh in full assurance of faith. It is the Father's joy to be with His sons, no matter where they go, or in what straits they are cast, He is with them.

He tenderly says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

#### 2. The Son Fellowships Saints

"Our fellowship is with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

The Lord Jesus said, "If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Jesus Christ gave promise, "Lo, I am with you alway." Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil for He is with us.

#### 3. The Spirit Fellowships Saints

"The communion of the Holy Ghost" (2Cor. 13:14).

The Spirit of God is both with us and in us, He never leaves us nor forsakes us, wherever we go He is there, ready to help and to strengthen, ready to fellowship and to favor.

It may seem simple that God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Spirit alike fellowship saints, but be it ever so simple, it assures us that each of the Trinity is very God, for only God could fellowship all saints, of all ages and of every clime — only God could satisfy them with His love.

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### Vance Havner on fellowship...

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

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

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

But there is also a fellowship of Satan:

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

"If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6).

"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

*We cannot have a heavenly fellowship  
if we allow a hindering fellowship.*

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols"  
--1 John 5:21

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

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**How Important is Fellowship** - During World War II, the enemy conducted experiments to find the most effective type of punishment for eliciting information from prisoners. They found that solitary confinement was the most effective. After a few days of solitary confinement, most men would tell all. That is why we need fellowship—without it we too become easy prey for temptation and abandonment of our values. Although this illustration describes the need of humanity in general, we can easily relate this truth to the need of Christian's sharing their lives with one another. (Adapted from Michael Green)

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

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

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

#### Related Passages:

2Cor 13:14+ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and and the love of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

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

### FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND SON

**And indeed our fellowship (*koinonia*) is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ - Our (*emeteros*)** is the possessive pronoun of the first person. You are probably asking "So what?" The Amplified has "And [this] fellowship that we have [which is a distinguishing mark of Christians]." I like that last addendum that fellowship with God is a distinguishing mark of our faith! I think I have underestimated the significance of this incredible truth!

**Hiebert** explains that this pronoun **OUR** "is a strong one; it is not the genitive of the personal pronoun but rather the first person plural of the possessive pronoun, **emphasizing an actual mutual possession**. This plural may be understood as restricted to the apostles, but it is more natural to hold that John deliberately chose this form to include his readers with him in this further aspect of their fellowship. No verb is used in the Greek, but English versions generally supply "**is**" to denote a positive assertion. For true believers this Godward fellowship is a fact, though a call to deepen it is always in order. This vertical fellowship is vital for true fellowship horizontally. Each reflects and influences the other. (Online [An Exposition of 1 John 1:1-4](#) - excellent)

**Our fellowship (*koinonia*) is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ** - As stated by Hiebert there is no verb "**is**" in the Greek but it has been added by the translators. Literally it reads "*our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*" John

emphasizes the reason his readers can experience fellowship with each other is because as believers they all have fellowship with the Father and the Son. In other words, the fellowship John and his readers experience is personal communion with the Father and the Son made possible by the past completed sacrifice and present ongoing mediation of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

*Vertical fellowship is vital  
for true fellowship horizontally*

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

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

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

As **Findlay** stated above "Jesus Christ had brought His disciples into spiritual union and fellowship with the living God."

**John Stott** makes an interesting observation that. "John does not here mention the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which is a characteristic expression in the Pauline Epistles (2Co 13:14; Phil 2:1), no doubt because the false teachers against whom he is writing make him concentrate on the Son, whom their heresy dishonored, and the Father whom they thereby forfeited. (BORROW [The Epistles of John : an introduction and commentary](#))

*This fellowship is a present experience of sharing  
in the eternal life of the Father and the Son.*

**Our fellowship (koinonia) is** - In John's experience this fellowship *is* vibrant, real, alive and dynamic, even though Christ had physically departed from this world some 60 years earlier. Fellowship with the Father and the Son transcends time and space, for it is a supernatural fellowship wrought by an unbreakable covenant bond and the Spirit of God (2Co 13:14+). This fellowship is a present experience of sharing in the eternal life of the Father and the Son. It is joint participation in a common life with the Godhead (VERTICAL) and with fellow Christians (HORIZONTAL). In sum, this sharing in the life of Christ is not a past experience, but a present reality, an ongoing lifestyle which will last forever and ever (Amen!)

**Lightner** rightly states "This is a stunning claim. The author of the epistle is stating that he is a part of a circle so intimate with God that if one has fellowship with his circle, one has fellowship with God the Father and with His Son." ([The Books of 1, 2, 3 John and Jude](#))

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

**With the Father and with His Son - His Son** (literally "the Son His") identifies the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Note that fellowship is **with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ** and that it is only possible in and through Christ. Stated another way, apart from Jesus Christ no man can experience fellowship with the Living God (cf Jn 14:6+).

**Marvin Vincent** calls our attention to "the repeated preposition **meta** (meaning "**with**"), distinguishing the two persons, and coordinating the fellowship with the Father, and the fellowship with the Son, thus implying sameness of essence. The fellowship with both contemplates both as united in the Godhead. ([Vincent - Word Studies](#))

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

**Toon** explains that "the fact and experience of Christian fellowship only exists because God the Father through Jesus Christ, the

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

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

**Colin Kruse** writes that "Christian fellowship is primarily a **fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ his Son**. The priority of the **Father** in this statement reflects the Johannine understanding of things. In the Fourth Gospel even eternal life is defined in similar terms: 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent' (John 17:3)." (See [The Letters of John - Page 58](#))

**R C H Lenski** has an interesting insight asking "Why does John not say at once "that you, too, may be having fellowship with the Father and his Son"? Why does he insert the apostles and say with whom their fellowship is to be enjoyed? Because of the antichrists, Cerinthus and his separatist following. In the first advanced circle of thought (1Jn 1:5–10), in 1Jn 1:6, 7 the true fellowship is set over against the false claim of fellowship with God. Cerinthus repudiated the testimony of the apostles regarding the Logos and the efficacy of His blood and thus scorned fellowship with John and with any of the apostles. Cerinthus claimed fellowship with God without the cleansing blood of Jesus, in his estimation only a man (Not the God-Man) died on the cross. That is why John introduces the fellowship already here....Throughout the past centuries even as today those who reject the testimony of the apostles have no fellowship with them, have no fellowship with the Father and with his Son, who is none other than Jesus Christ. Although they may preach God and fellowship with God as much as they please they are antichrists (4:3) and deny the Father as well as the Son. "Everyone denying the Son, neither has the Father" (2:23), may he claim what he will. "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God" (4:15), which alone is fellowship with God. All this is basic for the entire epistle and thus appears in John's basic statement (v. 1–4). (BORROW [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John](#))

**Burdick** notes that John's designation "**His Son Jesus Christ**" "leaves no room for any kind of Gnostic distinction between the divine Son and the human Jesus." ([The Letters of John the Apostle: An In-depth Commentary](#))

*This sweet communion with God*

*is kept up by holy meditation...*

*Communion with God*

*is kept up by prayer.*

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

**With His Son (huios) Jesus (Iesous) Christ (Christos)** - John uses this full title, **Jesus Christ**, 6 times, at least once in every chapter (1Jn 1:3, 2:1, 3:23, 4:2, 5:6, 5:20). Note that in this epistle, John also has two uses of **Jesus** and **Christ** in the form of a "*confession*" (1Jn 2:22, 1Jn 5:1). The Name **Jesus** (means "Jehovah is salvation" cp Mt 1:21+) emphasizes His humanity, while **Christ** emphasizes His deity. Indeed John's goal in manifold ways is that his readers know that the human **Jesus** is also the heavenly, divine **Messiah**, the **Christ** ("The Anointed One"). Recall that John is confronting false teaching that taught Jesus did not come in the flesh (2Jn 1:7), which of course means that His death had no efficacy in atoning for sin, for His blood was only a man's blood.

Keep in mind that the focal point of almost every cult is some foundational aspect of the Person and/or work of Jesus Christ, with the result that they teach "another Jesus" which results in damnation for all who believe in this "Jesus." (cp Paul's denunciation of "another Gospel" Gal 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 2Co 11:4) John is determined that his readers know the real Jesus Christ as the Son of God, for only in and through Him is their salvation assured.

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

The kind of relationship John described is only possible because Jesus is who John says He is in 1 John 1:1-2. If someone invited you to have a "personal relationship" with Napoleon, or Alexander the Great, or Abraham Lincoln - or even Moses or the Apostle Paul - we would think them foolish. One cannot even have a genuine "spiritual" relationship with a dead man. But with the eternal God who became man, we can have a relationship. The word **fellowship** has in it not only the idea of relationship, but of **sharing a common life**.

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

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

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

*True Christianity is an experience rooted in revelation  
and realized in relationship—with God and with other believers*

**Son** (**huios**) refers to a male offspring which Paul uses of mature believers (Gal 4:5), but is used by John only to refer to Jesus. Even though he refers to believers as **children** (**teknon** or teknon) of God, John never uses **huios** of believers and thus he makes a fundamental distinction between Jesus as the **Son (huios) of God** (7X - 1Jn 3:8, 4:15, 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 20) and believers as the **children of God** (1Jn 3:1, 3:2, 10, 5:2).

**Son** is clearly a key word in this letter for John uses it in every chapter, for a total of 22x in 18v - 1 John 1:3, 7; 2:22, 23 (2x), 1Jn 2:24; 3:8, 23; 4:9, 10, 14, 15; 5:5, 9, 10 (2x), 1Jn 5:11, 12 (2x), 1Jn 5:13, 20 (2x).

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

**Ray Stedman** comments that in this passage John teaches us "the most remarkable thing about Christian life, **communion**, or **fellowship** with Christ. It really takes two English words to bring out what this really means.

#### FELLOWSHIP IS PARTNERSHIP

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

This is the great secret of fellowship.

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

#### FELLOWSHIP IS FRIENDSHIP

But it is not only partnership, there is also **friendship**. Friendship and partnership together spell fellowship. Have you ever thought of this, that God desires you to be His friend? What do you do with a friend? You tell Him secrets. That is what friends are for. You tell them intimate things, secrets. And God wants to tell us secrets. Jesus said to His disciples, "I have not called you servants, but I have called you friends," (John 15:15) (**Ed**: As an aside "**friend**" is a covenant term which speaks of "oneness"**See explanation**).

He said this in a context in which He was attempting to impart to them the secrets of life. Now God will do this...He wants to do it. This is what that wonderful word, fellowship, means. But it will be as you are able to bear these secrets. As you grow along with Him you will discover that your eyes are continually being opened to things you never saw before. God will tell you secrets about yourself, about life, about others around you, about everything, imparting these to you because that is part of fellowship. That is what we are called to. The fellowship is based upon the relationship. You cannot have the fellowship until you first come to Christ and receive Him. When you have the Son you are related to the Father, and when you are related to Him, you can have fellowship with Him. ([1 John 1:1-4: Life With Father](#))

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

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

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

Well, suppose we are living in such a house as I have tried to describe to you, the first thing necessary for fellowship with such a father, and such a son, would be mutual communication. To live in the house where they were, yet never to speak to them, or to be spoken to by them, would be no sort of fellowship. Merely to know that there were such persons in the house, and to know that they were engaged in such blessed work as that, would not make us **partakers** with them, and would not give us **communion** with them. We must speak to them, and they must speak to us; and the speaking, on both sides, must be of a kind, loving sort; — not, on our part, that which would offend them; nor, on their part, that which would imply anger towards us. That is the very beginning of our **fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ**

*There must be mutual  
communication between us.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**John Montgomery Boice** summarizes John's discussion of **fellowship** asking "Why this enormous effort, beginning in eternity past, prepared for in the Old Testament writings, focused in Christ, seen by the apostles, preached by them, and recorded by them in the New Testament? And why should we be a part of it? John concludes the preface by stating this objective: "**that you also may have fellowship with us**" and "**to make our joy complete.**" John speaks of **fellowship** rather than salvation in these verses, perhaps because the **fellowship** had been so recently broken by the Gnostic schism. Properly understood, however, the word includes the full meaning of salvation, as the accompanying phrases indicate. There is salvation on the horizontal dimension. It is an overcoming of hostility between man and man. There is also salvation on the vertical dimension, between God and man. Indeed, John indicates that it is only when the latter is established that the first becomes possible. Why is it that human beings experience friction with one another? The answer, as James writes in his epistle, is sin (James 4:1ff.+). And how can sin be conquered? Not by men, certainly, for all are sinners. It can be conquered only by Christ, Who died once that **fellowship** might be restored between man and God and Who now lives in order to communicate the power of God in overcoming sin to those who follow Him. Those who are already Christians must take the words of John seriously. He says that the purpose of this great plan of God for the revelation of Himself to men and for their salvation is **fellowship**, and that on the horizontal level. How then can believers be content with that which disrupts their **fellowship**? Or how can they be content with an evangelism that wins men to God but fails to draw them into a vital and visible

relationship with one another? ([The Epistles of John](#) or [BORROW](#))

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### James Smith on OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH HIS SON. 1 John 1:3.

1. With His death, Gal. 2:20.
  2. With His life, Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1-3.
  3. With His nature, 2 Peter 1:4.
  4. With His Name, Eph. 3:14, 15.
  5. With His service, John 17:18.
  6. With His sufferings, 1 Peter 4:13.
  7. With His glory, Rom. 8:17; John 17:24; Rev. 20:4.
- 

**Puritan Thomas Brooks** commenting on the source of our **fellowship** with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ writes "that union which is between the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the subject and the prince, the body and the soul—are not so close a union as that which is between a believer and God. ([Ark8](#))"

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*Meditation is the bellows of the affections.  
It gives a sight and a taste of invisible glory.*

**Puritan Thomas Watson** had the following advice regarding **fellowship** and redeeming the time (Eph 5:16+) - Improve this short time by keeping up a close communion with God. 1 John 1:3: "**Our communion is with the Father.**" This sweet communion with God is kept up by holy meditation. Genesis 24:63 "*Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening.*" Meditation cements divine truths into the mind. It brings God and the soul together. Meditation is the bellows of the affections. It gives a sight and a taste of invisible glory. Psalm 104:34: "*My meditation of Him shall be sweet.*" Communion with God is kept up by prayer. **Praying days are ascension days.** Caligula placed his effigies in the capitol, whispering in Jupiter's ears. Prayer whispers in God's ears. It is a secret parley and conversation with God. On this mount of prayer, the soul has many sweet transfigurations. ([Time's Shortness - A sermon preached July 2, 1676, at the funeral of Pastor John Wells](#))

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

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*Without regeneration  
here is no communion with God.*

**Thomas Boston** emphasizes the necessity of regeneration in order to experience **fellowship** with God "Without regeneration there is no communion (fellowship) with God. There is a society on earth, whose "**fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,**" 1 John 1:3. But out of that society, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as you heard before at large. Now, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. They are all unholy: and "what communion has light with darkness – Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. 6:14,15. They may have a show and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness, and therefore "without God in the world." (Eph 2:12) How sad is it, to be employed in religious duties—yet to have no **fellowship** with God in them! (**ED**: cf "can do nothing" of eternal value - Jn 15:5+) You would not be content with your food, unless it nourished you; nor with your clothes, unless they kept you warm: and how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while you have no communion with God in them? ([Human Nature in its Fourfold State](#))"

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**Jerry Bridges** writes about "Communion with God" in his excellent book ["The Bookends of the Christian Life"](#) explaining that...

*This fellowship is both  
objective and subjective in nature*

This **fellowship** is both objective and subjective in nature. Objectively, it's an unbreakable union with Christ. In this sense, every believer has fellowship with Him at all times. This objective aspect is undoubtedly what Paul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 1:9. In addition, God intends for us to experience and enjoy this **fellowship** with Him as we consciously spend time in His presence. This subjective aspect of **fellowship** is likely what John had in mind in 1 John 1:3. And this is the type of **offellowship** we refer to as

communion. Communion is the experience of our union. One illustration of this is the marriage relationship. When we marry someone, there's an objective aspect to it—a legal union is formed the moment we say "I do." That's our status, even when we're apart or feel emotionally distant. But subjectively, we can experience a close and warm relationship as we spend time enjoying one another.

Desire for communion with God is vividly described in the Psalms.

"O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1+).

And:

"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:1–2+).

This concept of communion may be easy enough to see and understand intellectually, but we need more than intellectual assent and understanding; we need application. We need this truth to become our daily practice and our heart's desire. For that to happen, we are dependent on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as we work diligently at the spiritual disciplines. It is with this in mind that we offer the next chapter. ([The Bookends of the Christian Life](#))

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**Selwyn Hughes** has a fascinating insight on the truth of our fellowship with God -

### **Fellowship**

God is faithful; you were called by Him into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.—1 Corinthians 1:9

Seek fellowship with other Christians. Daniel Rowlands, a famous Welsh revivalist of a past century, said: "The whole purpose of the Christian message can be summarized in a single word—fellowship."

What did he mean? First John 1:3 spells it out clearly: "And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Listen to it as it appears in The Amplified Bible: "What we have seen and ourselves heard, we are also telling you, so that you too may realize and enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us. And this fellowship that we have ... is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah." At first, John seems to say that the fellowship is "with us," but he hastens to add that our fellowship "is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Follow me carefully now, for what I am about to say can be easily misunderstood: the person who does not know fellowship with God can never know fellowship with anyone else. It must be noted that I am here using the word "fellowship" in its highest possible sense. The one who does not know fellowship with God will feel, consciously or unconsciously, that he is cut off from the very roots of his being. He will feel like a spiritual orphan. This is why our horizontal relationships—that is, our relationship with ourselves and with others—can never be fully realized until we experience a vertical relationship, a relationship with God. Only when we are reconciled with God do we have the potential for experiencing true fellowship with ourselves and with others.

Prayer - Father, I see that I cannot experience true fellowship with myself or with others until I have known it with You. Help me to deepen my fellowship with You so that I might deepen it with others. In Jesus' name. Amen. ([Every Day with Jesus](#))

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### **Vance Havner - Back to the Spring!**

I have heard somewhere of a spring whose waters had certain medicinal properties so that those who drank from it were helped in the case of various infirmities. In the course of time, homes sprang up around the spring, then a hotel, stores, and eventually, a town that grew into a city. But there came a day when visitors would ask, "By the way, where is the spring from which this grew?" and dwellers in the city would rub their hands in embarrassment and say, "I am sorry that I cannot tell you, but, somehow, in the midst of all our progress and improvement we lost the spring and no one knows now where it is."

There is a sad application here for the church. Under all our ecclesiastical superstructure today we have lost the spring. We have been lost on the circumference and need to get back to the Center. We are out on the periphery and must needs find the Person by whom all things consist. We are majoring on the minor and minoring on the major. We need to relocate the Spring.

Paul stayed at the Spring, he never left the Center. There was plenty of sin in the New Testament days, but the early Christians did not busy themselves organizing anti-slavery societies and anti-Rome clubs. They gloried in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the issue. He always made Himself the issue. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." It is Christ or AntiChrist. Theoretically, we all agree to that. Ask any comfortable Sunday morning

congregation and they will nod approval. But it is not as simple as it looks. Break up that congregation into individuals and you will get a different story. Some are more interested in being vice-president of a club or circle than in all-out loyalty to Jesus Christ. They are interested in projects and preachers and movements, but their primary devotion is not to Jesus Christ. If He Himself were supreme our hearts and homes and churches would not be as they now are.

Our sole business is to glorify Jesus Christ. Someone has said, "There is only one thing in which God is interested and that is the exaltation and glorification of His Son. He is not interested in glorifying any individual, group movement, or body of people, or ecclesiastical system apart from Christ. He is interested in these only to the extent they exalt and glorify His Christ."

We agree to this theoretically, but actually our loyalty is to men and movements and systems, however loudly we may protest that such is not the case. Paul did not say, "To me to live is Christ first." He said, "To me to live is Christ." Christ was everything, first and last, Alpha and Omega.

The Christian experience may be set forth in four F's: Faith in Christ, Fellowship with Christ, Faithfulness to Christ, and Fruitfulness for Christ. Certainly it begins with Faith in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "I know whom I have believed." Everything else grows out of relationship with Christ and identification with Him. Think of the thousands who are depending on church or creed or character to save them. Thousands of church members have never been saved. We are trying to win to fellowship with Christ and faithfulness to Him many who need first to come to faith in Him. We beg backsliders to dig up musty church letters from the bottoms of trunks, join the church and go to work, with the idea that it will straighten them out spiritually. But we have reversed God's order. A man in proper relationship and fellowship with the Lord will be both faithful and fruitful all along the line, self, service, substance; but to reverse the procedure will not bring him into proper relationship and fellowship. These grow out of identification with Christ, they do not produce it. Joining church, attending church, tithing, and all the rest of it will follow getting right with Christ.

"He that is not with me is against me"—there is position, relationship, identification: "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad"—there is practise, faithfulness, fruitfulness. "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep"; "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"—there is the proper order.

Americans are notorious joiners. Give them a red button and a certificate and they will join anything. But joining a church does not join them to Christ. We must begin with that personal faith in Him by which we become members of His body.

We need to get relocated these days. To use the story with which we began, we need to find the spring somewhere among the skyscrapers we have built over it. Every great revival has begun with someone rediscovering the spring. The Quakers, Moravians, and Methodists began with someone finding the spring. But, like Ephesus, we get away from it. The great campaigns of Moody, Torrey, Chapman, Gypsy Smith and Billy Sunday brought the saints together around the spring again. Now and then in church history the city becomes too big, the ecclesiastical superstructure too complicated, and God starts out another man looking for the spring—faith in and fellowship with the living Christ.

Dr. Torrey used to give as the first step toward a revival: "Let a few members of any church get thoroughly right with God." Lenin said, "It is better to have a hundred fanatics than a thousand placid followers." The children of this world are wiser on this point than the children of light. Let a nucleus of real Christians thoroughly right with God start from Center, start from the spring, and expand, winning lukewarm Christians into fellowship and unsaved sinners into relationship with the Living Christ.

In geometry we use a compass with one prong stationary while we describe our circle with the other. Christ is the fixed center: "All power is given unto me"; our circumference is the world: "Go ye into all the world." And if we do not expand, the world, the flesh, and the devil will contract. If we do not push out, the devil will push in!

It is too late in the day for many of our vast projects and programs. There is time just to be Christians and to win others to be Christians. The issue is Jesus Christ, faith in and fellowship with the Living Christ that issues in faithfulness and fruitfulness.

The Christian experience may be set forth in four Fs: Faith in Christ, Fellowship with Christ, Faithfulness to Christ, and Fruitfulness for Christ.

## **1. Faith in Christ.**

Certainly it begins with Faith in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "I know whom I have believed." Everything else grows out of relationship with Christ and identification with Him.

In geometry we use a compass with one prong stationary while we describe our circle with the other. Christ is the fixed center: "All power is given unto me"; our circumference is the world: "Go ye into all the world." And if we do not expand, the world, the flesh, and the devil will contract. If we do not push out, the devil will push in!

## **2. What about fellowship with Christ?**

Is our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ? (1 John 1:3).

Is it the fellowship of the Spirit? (Phil. 2:1).

Is it fellowship in the Gospel? (Phil. 1:5).

Are we walking in the light so that we have fellowship one with another? (1 John 1:7).

Do we know anything about the fellowship of His sufferings? (Phil. 3:10).

Do we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness? (Eph. 5:11).

*There can be no heavenly fellowship  
if there is a hindering fellowship.*

### **3. Along with fellowship with Christ goes faithfulness to Christ.**

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor 4:2). Mind you, it is not optional, take-it-or-leave-it; it is required. We have been espoused to one husband and married to Christ, and unfaithfulness is adultery. John wrote to Gaius, "Thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest. " Do we work faithfully or is it flashily or fitfully? Shall we merit one day the final commendation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"?

### **4. If we are in fellowship and faithful, we shall be fruitful.**

We are married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4). If we abide in Him we shall bring forth much fruit. There is the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22, 23). Pity the Christian who claims to be living in the land of Canaan, with its figs and pomegranates, if all he has to show is crab apples!

Faith in Christ, Fellowship with Christ, Faithfulness to Christ, Fruitfulness for Christ—here is the heart of the matter. (Vance Havner [Hearts Afire](#))

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**Vance Havner - By Him Christian fellowship consists.** "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). I have heard of a church with a "Jesus Only" sign in front. One night a storm blew out the first three letters and left "Us Only." That has happened in more ways than one these days. The basis of fellowship is Jesus Christ. You cannot get the saints together at any other point. We are already one in Him. We have so many cliques now that an appropriate greeting would be, "How are you clique-ing?" Some saints have no testimony, only an argument. The mark of true fellowship is "love to all the saints," which springs from "faith in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:4). (Jesus Only - Devotional Meditations)

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**W H Griffith-Thomas** - (From Peniel - The Face of God) Peniel was a noteworthy landmark in Jacob's spiritual history. It was the third occasion and culminating-point of a special Divine revelation. The first was Bethel, where 'the House of God' reminded and assured him of the Divine Presence. The second was Mahanaim, where the 'Host of God' taught him the Divine Power. The third was Peniel, where he was led beyond the ideas of God's presence and power to that of Divine Favour and Fellowship. The 'Face' of God is used constantly in Scripture as a symbol of favour, friendship, fellowship (Exod. 33:11, 20; Deut. 34:10), and in the believer's life fellowship is the highest of our spiritual privileges (1 John 1:3). God desired and purposed to bring Jacob into this position of blessedness and power; and all the Divine dealings, from Bethel onwards, were intended to lead up to this. So it is now; everything that God has for us is expressed in terms of union and communion of which the New Testament is so full. What, then, will this fellowship accomplish?

*Fellowship with God  
changes Jacobs to Israels*

**1. The 'Face of God' is the place of transformation of character.**—Fellowship with God changes Jacobs to Israels. 'Beholding... we are being changed.' From this time onward there was a very distinct change in Jacob; and although the old nature was still there, Peniel had its effect and exercised transforming influence. There is nothing like fellowship with God to change and transfigure our nature.

**2. The 'Face of God' is the place of power for daily life.**—Like Jacob, we have to meet our Esau and we are afraid. We strive, plan, struggle, and all to no purpose. But we see God's Face, and all is changed. Power with man comes from power with God. We have, it may be, a crisis to-day; but first of all we pray, and the victory is gained. We wonder who will roll away the stone, but find that it is already gone. Fellowship with God gives insight and foresight, peace and patience, calm and courage in every emergency, and enables us to become 'more than conquerors' over every foe. Just as power with God came by surrender, so also will power with

men come by willing self-sacrifice on their behalf. Self is the greatest foe to blessing from God or influence with men.

*We must see the Face of God.*

**3. The 'Face of God' is the place of spiritual blessing.**—In the presence of God it is impossible to use carnal weapons. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' When Jacob came to an end of struggling and commenced clinging, the blessing quickly came. Jacob hitherto had no idea of a blessing obtained by passive receptiveness. But in the life of a true believer God's best gifts come that way. Gain comes by loss, gathering by scattering. So it must be always. Fellowship with God dispenses with subtrefuges, natural craft, and clever resourcefulness. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Blessing must be obtained in the right way or not at all. The supreme need of man is the grace of God, and this is not only independent of, but opposed to all that is merely earthly and human. Just as salvation is of God by grace, so is every spiritual blessing derived in the same way. Whether we think of the individual believer or the community of God's people, all grace comes through fellowship with God. Not by unworthy expedients, not by mere human effort, not by natural energy, but in union and communion with God all grace and blessing become ours. We must see the Face of God.

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### **Paul Enns - FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**

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. (1 John 1:3)

I well recall my early days as a Christian. How important the fellowship with other believers was to me! Discussing biblical truths on the steps of the church building until 11:00 P.M., laboring together in feeding the hungry with food and the gospel at the rescue mission, traveling together to rural areas to minister the gospel-fellowship was vital to me then and still is.

We have been called into a greater fellowship-with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Fellowship (koinonia) means "association," "communion," "a close relationship," and "sharing." God made our heavenly fellowship possible when He called us into fellowship with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9). Even though we have divisions on earth, God is faithful in bringing us into fellowship with Christ. At the Communion table, where we remember Christ's death, we fellowship with Him (1 Corinthians 10:16). Since the Holy Spirit is "another Comforter" like Christ, we are also brought into fellowship with Him (2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1).

What shall we do to foster fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? We cannot have intimate fellowship with unbelievers who loathe the Christ we love (2 Corinthians 6:14). Light and darkness are not compatible. We may also need to suffer. Paul desired to know Christ intimately through the power of His resurrection but also through fellowship with Christ's sufferings, "becoming like him in his death" (Philippians 3:10). This may mean ostracism and rejection for the cause of Christ. It means walking in the light and confessing our sins (1 John 1:6, 9).

Christ has made our heavenly fellowship possible. He brought us eternal life and revealed the Father, that we might have fellowship with God the Father and the Son. John saw and heard the eternal Life, proclaiming it that we may have fellowship with Him. This fellowship is our destiny, and in it our joy becomes complete.

LESSON: Through Christ, believers have been brought into fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See [Approaching God - Page 5](#))

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### **C H Spurgeon from sermon [Fellowship with God](#) -**

*Among the rich dainties....of which his soul was a partaker, we must number first and foremost, unbroken communion with God, his Father and his Friend*

FELLOWSHIP with God was one of the richest privileges of unfallen man. The Lord God walked in the garden, and talked with Adam as a man talketh with his friend. So long as he was willing and obedient, Adam ate the fat of the land, and among the rich dainties and "wines on the lees well refined," of which his soul was a partaker, we must number first and foremost, unbroken communion with God, his Father and his Friend. Sin, as it banished man from Eden, banished man from God, and from that time our face has been turned from the Most High, and his face has been turned from us; — we have hated God, and God has been angry with us every day. Christ came into the world to restore to us our lost patrimony. It was the great object of his wondrous sacrifice to put us into a position which should be equal and even superior to that which we occupied in Adam before the fall; and as he has already restored to us many things that we lost, so among the rest— fellowship with God. They who have by his grace believed, and have by the precious blood been washed, have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord; they are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God," and they have access with boldness into this grace wherein we stand. (Ro 5:1-2) So they who are in the kingdom, and under the dispensation of the second Adam, have restored to them in all its fullness that fellowship which was lost to them by the sin and disobedience of their first federal head. John was among

the number of those who had enjoyed this privilege with Christ in his flesh. He had been Christ's chosen companion, elect out of the elect to a choice and peculiar privilege. During the incarnation, he was one of the favoured three who had enjoyed the closest intimacy with the Redeemer; he had seen Christ in his transfiguration, had witnessed the raising of the dead maid, had been with the Lord in the garden, and he had lingered with him even when the thrust was given after death, and the blood and water flowed from his pierced heart. John had the nearest, the dearest, the closest fellowship with Christ in the flesh. As he had laid his head upon Christ's bosom, so had he laid all his thoughts and all the emotions of his mind upon the heart's love and divine affection of his Lord and Master. But Christ was gone; it was no more possible to hear his voice, to see him with eyes, or to handle him with hands; yet John had not lost his fellowship, though he knew him no more after the flesh, yet he knew him after a nobler sort. Nor was his fellowship less real, less close, less sweet, or less divine, than it had been when he had walked and talked with him, and had been privileged to eat and drink with him at that last sacred feast. John says, "Truly our fellowship is"— not was— "is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

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### G Campbell Morgan -

Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.— 1 John 1.3

This is one of the greatest statements of the New Testament, and it may safely be said that its greatness is created by the richness of the word which is the emphatic word, viz. **fellowship**. This is a word which was actually used by Paul more often than any other New Testament writer, but the conception is most perfectly interpreted by John. The marvel of this particular statement will best be apprehended if we accurately apprehend the significance of the word. The Greek word **koinonia** is derived from the word *koinos*, which very literally means common, in the sense of being shared by all. The use of that word *koinos*, or common, in our New Testament, which will help us most in this consideration, is that made of it by Luke when he declared that "All that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2.44). Fellowship then is that community of relationship which expresses itself in community of resource and responsibility. Those who have a fellowship one with another, are those who share the same resources, and are bound by the same responsibilities.

*Those who have a fellowship one with another,  
are those who share the same resources, and are bound by the same responsibilities.*

**The idea becomes almost overwhelming when it is thus applied to the relationship which believing souls bear to the Father, and to His Son Jesus Christ. It is a subject which can be meditated in silence better than interpreted by words.** The whole of this letter helps us in such meditation. We may reverently attempt to summarize by repeating what is already said. **The Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and all believers have all things in common. All the resources of each in the wondrous relationship are at the disposal of the others. Such is the grace of our God, and of His Son.** (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

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### Warren Wiersbe on 1 John 1:3 - REAL LIFE

When God made us, He made us in His own image (Ge 1:26-27). This means that we have a personality patterned after God's. We have a mind to think with, a heart to feel with, and a will with which to make decisions. We sometimes refer to these aspects of our personality as intellect, emotion, and will. The life that is real must involve all the elements of the personality. Most people are dissatisfied today because their total personality has never been controlled by something real and meaningful. When a person is born of God through faith in Christ, God's Spirit comes into his life to live there forever. As he has fellowship with God in reading and studying the Bible and in prayer, the Holy Spirit is able to control his mind, heart, and will. And what happens then?

- A Spirit-controlled mind knows and understands truth.
- A Spirit-controlled heart feels love.
- A Spirit-controlled will inclines us to obedience.

John wants to impress this fact on us, and that is why he uses a series of contrasts in his letter: truth vs. lies, love vs. hatred, and obedience vs. disobedience. There is no middle ground in the life that is real. We must be on one side or on the other.

This, then, is the life that is real. It was revealed in Christ; it was experienced by those who trusted in Christ; and it can be shared today.

### Applying God's Truth:

1. Of your own intellect, emotion, and will, which would you say is most in need of further development?
2. Which of the three aspects of personality do you think most people find hardest to submit to God? Why?
3. For each of the three areas, what is one thing you can do this week to give the Holy Spirit more control?

(Borrow [Pause for power : a 365-day journey through the Scriptures](#))

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Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The life of fellowship with God cannot be built up in a day. F. B. MEYER.

Crucified with Him.—Ro. 6:6.  
Died with Christ. (Alford's Trans.).—Ro. 6:8.  
Buried with Him.—Ro. 6:4.  
Planted together in the likeness of His death.—Ro. 6:5.  
Planted together in the likeness of His resurrection.—Ro. 6:5.  
Quickened together.—Ep. 2:5.  
Raised up together.—Ep. 2:6.  
Sitting together in heavenly places.—Ep. 2:6.  
Living together.—1 Th. 5:10.  
Working together.—Mk 16:20.  
Suffering together.—Ro. 8:17.  
Glorified together.—Ro. 8:17.

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### **C H Spurgeon - Fellowship with God** (Full sermon [Fellowship with God](#))

That which is the Father's employment is our employment. I speak not of you all; he knows whom he has chosen. We cannot join with the Father in upholding all worlds, we cannot send forth floods of light at the rising of the sun, we cannot feed the cattle on a thousand hills, nor can we give food and life to all creatures that have breath. But there is something which we can do which he does. He does good to all his creatures, and we can do good also. He bears witness to his Son Jesus, and we can bear witness too. The 'Father worketh hitherto' that his Son may be glorified, and we work too. O Eternal Worker! it is his to save souls, and we are co-workers with him. You are his husbandry, you are his building; he scatters the seed of truth, we scatter it too; his words speak comfort, and our words comfort the weary too, when God the Spirit is with us. We hope we can say, 'For me to live is Christ;' and is this not what God lives for too? We desire nothing so much as to glorify him, and this is the Father's will, as well as Jesus Christ's prayer, 'Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.' Do you not see, brethren, that we stand on the same platform with the eternal God? When we lift our hand, he lifts up his eternal arm; when we speak, he speaks too, and speaks the same thing; when we purpose Christ's glory, he purposes that glory too; when we long to bring home the wandering sheep, and to recall the prodigal sons, he longs to do the same. So that in that respect we can say, 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'

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### **James Smith - OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH HIS SON 1 John 1:3**

1. With His death, Gal. 2:20.
  2. With His life, Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1–3.
  3. With His nature, 2 Peter 1:4.
  4. With His Name, Eph. 3:14, 15.
  5. With His service, John 17:18.
  6. With His sufferings, 1 Peter 4:13.
  7. With His glory, Ro 8:17; John 17:24; Rev. 20:4.
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### **John MacArthur - FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST** (Borrow [Strength for today](#))

"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." 1 Jn 1:3

*Enjoying communion with both God and Jesus Christ  
is solid proof that one's salvation is real.*

When we hold baptisms in the church I pastor, invariably every person who gives their testimony will describe the overwhelming sense of forgiveness they now feel and the new purpose they have for their lives. They are expressing a wonderful result of salvation in Christ, of which Jesus said, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10). By saying that life could be abundant, Jesus was saying that salvation would result in more than a change of position—it is a change of experience! The Christian life is a rich life in which we are meant to experience joy, peace, love, and purpose.

The abundant life in Christ begins with a close communion and fellowship with the living God and the living Christ. The apostle Paul

says, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). In Galatians 2:20 Paul describes what that fellowship meant to him personally: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." Great intimacy with Christ belongs to all genuine believers.

Have you experienced communion with God and Christ? Have you sensed Their presence? Does your love for Them draw you into Their presence? Have you experienced the exhilarating joy of talking in prayer to the living God? And have you experienced the thrill of discovering a new truth in His Word? If you have, then you have experienced the abundant life that Jesus promised to all who put their trust in Him.

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Suggestions for Prayer: Much like God asked Israel to recount the great works He had done for them, meditate on the many ways God has made your life richer as a result of knowing Him.

For Further Study: Read Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 5:19; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 4:16; and 1 Peter 5:10. What does each verse teach about your relationship with God? ◇ In what ways is your life abundant as a result?

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### **F B Meyer Our Daily Homily The Communion of the Holy Ghost.**

How often these words are uttered without any real appreciation of their depth of meaning! The word communion signifies having in common. It is used of our fellowship with one another (1 Corinthians 10:16) and with God (1Jn 1:3). The bond of such fellowship is always through the Holy Spirit. As the ocean unites all lands, and is the medium through which they are able to exchange commodities, so does the blessed Spirit unite the Persons of the Blessed Trinity to each other, and us to them, and secures that oneness for which our Savior prayed.

How wonderful it is to have the privilege of this Divine fellowship! That we need never be alone again; that we can at any moment turn to Him for advice and direction; that we may draw on his resources for the supply of every need; that it is impossible to exhaust or even tax his willingness to counsel and succour; that there is no kind of service or suffering into which He is not prepared to enter with us! Surely, if we would but give ourselves time to realize this marvellous fact, there would be no room for the despondency which at times threatens to deprive us of heart and hope.

Of course, we must be very careful of the tender sensibilities and holy disposition of our divine Confederate. We cannot ruthlessly grieve Him by our harshness or impurity at one moment, and turn to Him for his succor and direction at the next. Such divine union as lies within our reach certainly demands on our part watchfulness, a tender conscience, a yielded and pliant will, a heart which has no other love, no affection nor idol inconsistent with the Spirit's fellowship.

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*Fellowship is the crowning purpose of God's revelation*

**W H Griffith-Thomas** - Fellowship is the crowning purpose of God's revelation (1 John 1:3). There is nothing higher than this, for man's life finds its complete realisation in union and communion with God. Notice the following elements:—

#### **1. Sacred Intimacy.—**

The picture of God as the guest of Abraham is a symbol of that spiritual relationship which is brought very clearly and beautifully before us in the New Testament. What an unspeakable privilege it is to have God as our Guest, and for us to be His guests (John 14:23; Rev. 3:20.)

#### **2. Genuine Humility.—**

Abraham's attitude on this occasion is noteworthy. He quickly realised Who had come, and although he had all the privileges of fellowship, he never forgot his own true place and position. So is it always with the true believer. He never forgets that, notwithstanding all the privileges of fellowship, God is God, and he himself is nothing. Reverence is never separated from the fullest, freest realisation of the Gospel of Grace. While we have 'access,' it is 'access into the Holiest' (Heb. 10:10). There is no incompatibility, but the most beautiful fitness in the freedom, freeness, and fulness of Divine grace, combined with the attitude of reverential awe in those who are partakers of grace. 'Holy and reverend is His Name' (Ps. 111:9).

#### **3. Special Revelation.—**

Fellowship with God is always associated with the knowledge of His will. Servants do not know their master's purposes, but friends and intimates do (Amos 3:3, 7). Our Lord taught this plainly to His disciples (John 15:15). There is no position like that of fellowship with God for knowing fully our Master's will. (Cf. John 13:25, R.V.).

#### 4. Unique Association.—

The man who is in fellowship with God does not merely know the Divine will, but becomes associated with God in the carrying out of that will. God deliberately and definitely associated Abraham with the realisation of His purposes (Ge 18:17-19+), and this has ever been the case. The friends of God become His fellow-workers, and are used to carry out the wide-reaching purposes of His will to mankind. In view of all these glorious privileges and solemn responsibilities of fellowship with God, 'what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' (2Pe 3:11+) (Genesis Devotional Commentary)

1 John 1:3

Bible in a Year:

Genesis 27-28; Matthew 8:18-34

When the Day of Discovery television crew interviews people for a biography, we especially enjoy talking with those who knew the person whose life-story we are telling. Over the years, we've talked with a man who roomed with Eric Liddell in an internment camp in China; a woman who as a teenager lived in the home of C. S. Lewis during World War II; and a man who chauffeured Dr. George Washington Carver on a speaking tour throughout the southern US. They all spoke freely and openly about the special person they knew.

When John, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, was an old man, he wrote a letter in which his opening words established him as an eyewitness and close companion of Jesus: "The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us" (1 John 1:2). His goals in writing were "that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (v.3) and "that your joy may be full" (v.4). The eyewitness accounts of Jesus' disciples help lead us to faith in Christ. Even though we have not seen Him as they did, we have believed.

Thank You, Father, for the reliable eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life that we can read in Your Word. And thank You for people in our lives who know Him. They help us believe too.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. —Jesus

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That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us. 1Jn 1:3 (Heb 10:25, Heb 3:13)

We are hearing a lot these days about networking. This term refers to the people in our lives—relatives, friends, and associates—who are part of our emotional and physical support base. They are the people we can count on for help. When we're out of a job looking for an emergency loan, or grieving, they are the ones who stand by us.

The idea of networking is closely akin to the Christian concept of fellowship. It transcends racial, social, economic, and sexual differences and unites a wide variety of people in the worship and service of Christ.

The true nature of Christian fellowship may be clarified by contrasting the use of two German words. The first, *gesellschaft*, refers to people thrown together without deep ties, such as all the people riding the same bus. The second, *gemeinschaft*, refers to those with intimate ties of family or community.

We need the fellowship of a community of believers who love, encourage, and pray for one another. —D. C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

WE NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO BUILD US UP AND SUPPORT TO HOLD US UP.

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

The object of this **fellowship** is the Father and the Son. I say the object, for there is but one. No doubt the Father and the Son may be considered separately, as two distinct persons with whom you may have fellowship. And in some views and for some ends it may be quite warrantable, and even necessary, to distinguish the fellowship which you have with the Father from that which you have with his Son Jesus Christ.

As Christ is the way, the true and living way, to the Father, so fellowship with Him as such must evidently be preparatory to fellowship with the Father. But it is not thus that Christ is here represented. He is not put before the Father as the way to the Father, fellowship with Whom is the means, leading to fellowship with the Father as the end. He is associated with the Father. Together, in Their mutual relation to One Another and Their mutual mind or heart to One Another, They constitute the one object of this fellowship. The **Father and His Son Jesus Christ**; not Each apart, but the Two—both of Them—together; with whatever the Spirit of the Father and the Son may be commissioned to show, and your spirits may be enabled to take in, of the counsel of peace that is between Them both; that is what is presented to you as the object of your fellowship.

*It is a great idea.*

*Who can grasp it?*

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

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

*FELLOWSHIP...TRULY KNOWN  
ONLY BY EXPERIENCE*

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

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

between the Father and the Son, I may be profoundly and most stupidly indifferent as to what that transaction really is, and what the Father and the Son are to One Another in it. In such a state of mind there can be no "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

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

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

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

#### *ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS*

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

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

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

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

*Is the thought too vast,  
indistinct, infinite?*

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

When the earth was prepared for man, and for the acting out of all heaven's purpose of grace to man, "I was," says the Son, "by Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." When He came in the flesh to execute that purpose, once at least in His humiliation it is testified of Him, that He "rejoiced in spirit;"—it was when He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Luke 10:21). Into that joy of holy acquiescence in the wise and holy sovereignty of the Father you can enter. And you can hear Him and obey Him, when bringing home one and another of the poor wandering sheep He came to seek, He makes his appeal to you as knowing His mind and entering into His heart;—"Rejoice with Me, for I have found that which was lost." Rejoice with Me. Yes! Rejoice with Me, as my Father calls Me to rejoice with Him! "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this our brother was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

## FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER

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

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

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

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

**(2.) The same kind of happiness, though not in the same degree** The happiness of God is found in holiness, truth, purity, justice, mercy, benevolence. (**Ed:** Happiness may not be the best word, for strictly speaking it depends on what "happens"! However, divine happiness is independent of the circumstances. Therefore for believers, such "happiness" is not natural but supernatural! Blessed be the Name of the LORD.)

The happiness of the Christian is of the same kind that God has; the same kind that angels have; the same kind that he will himself have in heaven—for the **joy** (better word than "happiness") of heaven is only that which the Christian has now, expanded to the utmost capacity of the soul, and freed from all that now interferes with it, and prolonged to eternity.

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

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

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

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

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Samuel Davies writes that

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

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

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."...23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. (Jn 14:21, 23)

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

unsearchable riches of fellowship with the Father and His Son?"

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

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

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

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

**Steven Cole** comments that "It's easy to put on a religious veneer by claiming that you have fellowship with God, when really, you're walking in the darkness and deceiving yourself. John doesn't want us to play spiritual dominoes. He wants us to experience genuine fellowship with the holy God by walking in the light, as He Himself is in the light. ([1 John 1:1-3 The Tests of True Christianity](#))"

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### [Tell the Story](#)

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. 1 John 1:3

Today's Scripture & Insight : 1 John 1:1–4

Robert Todd Lincoln, son of US president Abraham Lincoln, was present for three major events—the death of his own father as well as the assassinations of presidents James Garfield and William McKinley.

But consider that the apostle John was present at four of history's most crucial events: the last supper of Jesus, Christ's agony in Gethsemane, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. John knew that bearing witness to these events was the ultimate why behind his presence in these moments. In John 21:24, he wrote, "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true."

John reaffirmed this in his letter of 1 John. He wrote, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim" (1:1). John felt a compelling duty to share his eyewitness account of Jesus. Why? "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard," he said, "so that you also may have fellowship with us" (v. 3).

The events of our lives may be surprising or mundane, but in either case God is orchestrating them so we can bear witness to Him. As we rest in the grace and wisdom of Christ, may we speak for Him in even life's surprising moments. By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What are some of the more surprising aspects of your faith story? How will you share your story with someone who needs to hear of God's love?

Jesus, please help me be sensitive to those times when I can share with others how much You love us.

## Puritan Daily Readings - In All Our Communion

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

Not only in the emanation of grace from God and the illapses of the Spirit on us, but also in all our approaches unto God, are the distinctions observed. "For through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Our access unto God (wherein we have communion with Him) is through Christ and in the Spirit and unto the Father—the persons being here considered as engaged distinctly unto the accomplishment of the counsel of the will of God revealed in the gospel. Sometimes, indeed, there is express mention made only of the Father and the Son, "**Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ**" (1 John 1:3). The particle "and" is both distinguishing and uniting. Also "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). It is in this communion wherein Father and Son do make their abode with the soul. Sometimes the Son only is spoken of, as to this purpose. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). And, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). Sometimes the Spirit alone is mentioned. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). This distinct communion, then, of the saints with the Father, Son, and Spirit, is very plain in the Scripture.

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## A PAID FRIEND - David Jeremiah

1 JOHN 1:3 You also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

A famous British playwright was leaving Liverpool by ship. He noticed that the other passengers were waving to friends on the dock. Just before the ship was to leave, he rushed down to the dock and stopped a little boy. "Would you wave to me if I pay you?" he asked the boy. "Of course," he agreed. The writer gave him a few shillings, then ran back aboard and leaned over the rail. Sure enough, the boy was waving to him. The playwright disliked solitude and loneliness so much that he had gone so far as to create an artificial friend. To him, though, even the semblance of friendship was better than the crushing loneliness he felt.

The key to assurance in life is fellowship. Fellowship with people locks out the grim feelings of loneliness. And fellowship with God keeps away the threat of eternal solitude.

In this epistle, John wanted to make it clear to his readers that they could fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. He stressed the importance of love: Since Christians have experienced the love of God in their lives, they have no need to fear either in this life or in the life to come. (See [Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#))

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## EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. —1 John 1:3

I work with the Day of Discovery TV crew. When we are making a film about someone's life, we especially like speaking with those who knew the person well. Over the years we've talked with a man who shared a room with Eric Liddell in an internment camp in China; a woman who as a teenager lived in the home of C. S. Lewis during World War II; and a man who chauffeured Dr. George Washington Carver on a speaking tour throughout southern America. They all spoke freely and openly about the special person they knew.

When John, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, was an old man, he wrote a letter in which his opening words explained he was an eyewitness and close companion of Jesus: "The life was [made known], and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was [made known] to us" (1 John 1:2). His goals in writing were "that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (v.3) and "that your joy may be full" (v.4).

The eyewitness accounts of Jesus' disciples help lead us to faith in Christ. Even though we have not seen Him as they did, we have believed.

*BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED.*

—JESUS

David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## **We Touched Him!**

Mythology is filled with legends of ancient gods who descended from heaven and took human form, but no one ever heard or saw them, and no one ever touched them. These were dreams born of human desire for God and the hope that someday He would draw near. The incarnation of Jesus—God who came in the flesh—is how those dreams came true.

Author **Dorothy Sayers** put it this way: [God] can exact nothing from man that He has not exacted from Himself. He has Himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. When He was a man, He played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace and thought it well worthwhile.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the irrefutable proof that God will do anything to draw near to us.

**Augustine** said, "[God] gave Himself for a time to be handled by the hands of men."

And we have the written record of John, a man who actually did touch Him. We can trust his account—and we can trust that God wants to be near to you and me.—David H Roper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

*Absolutely tender! Absolutely true!  
Understanding all things; understanding you;  
Infinitely loving, good and kind and near—  
That is Christ our Savior. What have we to fear?*  
—Anon.

*Love was when God became a man.*  
—Walvoord

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### [When the Water Blushed](#)

In the beginning was the Word . . . Through him all things were made. John 1:1, 3

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 1:1-14

Why did Jesus come to Earth before the invention of photography and video? Couldn't He have reached more people if everyone could see Him? After all, a picture is worth a thousand words.

"No," says Ravi Zacharias, who asserts that a word can be worth "a thousand pictures." As evidence, he quotes poet Richard Crashaw's magnificent line, "The conscious water saw its Master and blushed." In one simple line, Crashaw captures the essence of Jesus' first miracle (John 2:1-11). Creation itself recognizes Jesus as the Creator. No mere carpenter could turn water to wine.

Another time, when Christ calmed a storm with the words, "Quiet! Be still," His stunned disciples asked, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" (Mark 4:39, 41). Later, Jesus told the Pharisees that if the crowd did not praise Him, "the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40). Even the rocks know who He is.

John tells us, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory" (John 1:14). Out of that eyewitness experience John also wrote, "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. . . . He is the Word of life" (1 John 1:1 nlt). Like John, we can use our words to introduce others to Jesus whom wind and water obey. By: Tim Gustafson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Jesus, we acknowledge You as the Creator who knows and loves His creation. Yet You wait for us to invite You into every aspect of our lives. Forgive us for those times we keep You at a safe distance. Today we choose to risk knowing You more completely.

**The written Word reveals the Living Word.**

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### **Why We Need Others -**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**No Christian is meant to be an island.**

## Communion with God

### John MacDuff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Robert Hawker** - Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.—1 John 1:3

PRECIOUS, blessed consideration! Art thou, my soul, at this time in the full enjoyment of it? Pause over the inquiry. Sometimes for the want of this search of soul, and the neglect of it, deadness, or at least leanness, creeps in. Say then, my soul, how art thou dealing with thy God; and how is thy God dealing with thee? When were his latest manifestations? When did he take thee to his banqueting-house; or, when didst thou sit under his shadow? Hast thou very lately heard his voice, saying, "Fear not, I am thy salvation?" The discovery of these things are among the sweetest exercises which flow from the indwelling Spirit. Go on further in the inquiry—How art thou seeking with thy God? When hadst thou fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ? What petitions hast thou now awaiting for answers from the heavenly court? What grateful acknowledgements have lately gone up for mercies received? How is thine acquaintance there advancing? How art thou growing in grace, and in the knowledge of thy Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? If these things are neglected by thee, will not a strangeness between thy God and thee come on; such as is induced by earthly friendships, when absence and time, where there is no correspondence kept up, wears out remembrance? My soul! rouse up and consider the vast importance of keeping up constant intercourse with thy God and Saviour. Precious Jesus! do thou keep the flame of love alive; manifest to my soul the certainty and reality of my union with thee, thou sweet Saviour, by causing this blessed communion to be constant, unceasing, and full of divine communications. Let thy Spirit call forth in me the exercise of the graces he hath planted; and do thou come forth in refreshing manifestations of love; so that, while prayers go up, blessings may come down; and while thou art graciously saying, "Seek ye my face," my heart may say unto thee, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Oh the blessedness of such a life! to break the power of sin; to revive and strengthen the spirits; to open and enlarge to my view the discoveries of thy Person, thy glory, thy riches, thy suitableness, thine all-sufficiency!

If, dearest Jesus! thou wilt mercifully keep this fellowship, this partnership, alive in my soul, how will my poor soul be living upon thee, and with thee; and how shall I be exchanging with thee all my leanness, poverty, wretchedness, and weakness, for thy fulness, riches, righteousness, and strength. Come then, Lord Jesus! and until the day break, and the shadows flee away, "turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether!"