

# 1 John 1:6-7 Commentary

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1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth  
([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Ean eipomen](#) (1PAAS) [oti koinonian echomen](#) (1PPAI) [met' autou kai en to skotei peripatomen](#), (1PPAS) [pseudometha](#) (1PPM/PI) [kai ou poioumen](#) (1PPAI) [ten aletheian](#):

**Amplified:** [So] if we say we are partakers together and enjoy fellowship with Him when we live and move and are walking about in darkness, we are [both] speaking falsely and do not live and practice the Truth [which the Gospel presents]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ([ESVBible.org](#))

**KJV:** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

**NLT:** So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Consequently, if we were to say that we enjoyed fellowship with him and still went on living in darkness, we should be both telling and living a lie. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** If we say that things in common we are having with Him, and thus fellowship, and in the sphere of the aforementioned darkness are habitually ordering our behavior, we are lying, and we are not doing the truth.

**Young's Literal:** if we may say -- 'we have fellowship with Him,' and in the darkness may walk -- we lie, and do not the truth

IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM AND YET WALK IN THE DARKNESS: Ean eipomen (1PAAS) oti koinonian echomen (1PPAI) met' autou kai en to skotei peripatomen, (1PPAS):

- **If:** 1Jn 1:8,10 2:4 4:20 Mt 7:22 Jas 2:14,16,18 Rev 3:17,18
- **fellowship:** 1Jn 1:3 Ps 5:4-6 94:20 2Co 6:14-16
- **walk:** 1Jn 2:9-11 Ps 82:5 Pr 2:13 4:18,19 Jn 3:19,20 11:10 12:35,46)
- [1 John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A WATERSHED PASSAGE

**The interpretation of 1John 1:6 marks a "watershed"** (Webster = "*a crucial dividing point, line, or factor*") among commentators and commentaries. The division is between those who feel that what John is saying does not relate to tests of one's salvation but relates to "tests" of fellowship in the sense of one's daily communion with God. In other words the first group says that John is not describing criteria by which one can discriminate between **professors** of Christ and **possessors** of Christ, those who really do know Him and are truly born again.

The second, far more common (and older) interpretative position is that John is describing the difference in behavior of those who claim to be Christians and those who are genuine followers of Christ. **The reader should understand that these notes favor the latter interpretation as the most accurate.** However, keep in mind that while Scripture can have only one true interpretation, it can have many valid applications and that is the approach taken by these notes.

**Gary Derickson** aptly summarizes the interpretative position held by the majority of scholars...

According to this view John's purpose in writing the epistle was to encourage his readers, who were understood to be believers, to assure themselves of their salvation by verifying the validity of their profession through tests of spiritual life. These tests include doctrinal agreement with the apostles' teaching and submission to their standard of conduct, namely, loving the brethren and living righteously. Eternal life, understood as a soteriological term, is the subject of the epistle, with Christian certainty serving as the

dominant theme throughout the work. Salvation is the subject of the epistle's prologue in its focus on the "Word of Life" and the apostolic proclamation of "eternal life" (1Jn 1:1-2). With eternal life as its central subject, the epistle develops three tests by which members of the believing community can recognize that they do indeed possess that life.

These three tests of the Christian life are belief (truth), righteousness (obedience), and love. These indicate whether a person has eternal life, and is therefore in communion with God, or does not and is merely professing faith. Passing these tests produces assurance of salvation, since there is a correlation between possession of life and production of fruit as evidence of eternal life. John's purpose was not to cause his readers to doubt their salvation, but to find assurance in it. Fruit can be used either to reveal the absence of eternal life in an individual or to assure him of the presence of that life. ([Reference](#))

In summary, these notes are written with a prayerful attitude that they might rightly divide the Word of Truth accurately (2Ti 2:15). The reader is strongly encouraged to assume a "Berean-like" mindset, and read John's inspired epistle with great eagerness but continually observe the Scriptures daily for themselves, "to see whether these things" written in these notes are indeed an accurate reflection of John's original intent! (See Acts 17:11-note)

<b>THE TWO MAJOR INTERPRETATIVE VIEWS OF FIRST JOHN:</b>	
<b>TESTS OF SALVATION</b>	<b>TESTS OF FELLOWSHIP</b>
<b>Are you truly...</b> <b>Regenerated, born again, justified?</b>	<b>Are you being</b> <b>progressively sanctified?</b>
<b>The writers in this group believe John's purpose is summarized in 1John 5:13 = He desires for his readers to have assurance of their salvation.</b>	<b>The writers in this group believe John's purpose is summarized in 1John 1:3 = He desires that his readers have fellowship with God and one another.</b>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Daniel Akin (New American Commentary)</li> <li>■ Henry Alford (<a href="#">1 John Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Paul Apple (<a href="#">1 John Devotional Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Wayne Barber (Evidence of Christianity)</li> <li>■ Peter Barnes (Knowing Where We Stand: The Message of John's Epistles, Welwyn Commentary Series, 1998)</li> <li>■ Glenn Barker (Expositor's Bible Commentary)</li> <li>■ James M. Boice (The Epistle of John: Baker, 1979)</li> <li>■ Raymond Brown (The Epistles of John, Anchor Bible)</li> <li>■ A E Brooke (<a href="#">A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles</a>)</li> <li>■ John Butler (Analytical Bible Exposition)</li> <li>■ John Calvin (<a href="#">1 John Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Steven Cole (<a href="#">Tests of True Christianity</a>)</li> <li>■ W A Criswell (Believer's Study Bible)</li> <li>■ C. H. Dodd (The Johannine Epistles, Moffatt NT Commentary)</li> <li>■ J Ligon Duncan (<a href="#">1 John 1:5-7 Being Like God</a>)</li> <li>■ D. Edmond Hiebert (<a href="#">1 John Exposition</a>)</li> <li>■ David Jackman (The Message of John's Letters: IVP)</li> <li>■ Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Fellowship with God)</li> <li>■ Simon Kistemaker (<a href="#">New Testament Commentary: Baker</a>)</li> <li>■ KJV Bible Commentary</li> <li>■ Colin Kruse (Pillar NT commentary)</li> <li>■ Robert Law, The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John (T. &amp; T. Clark, 1909)</li> <li>■ John MacArthur (<a href="#">1-3 John Moody</a>)</li> <li>■ I. Howard Marshall, (The Epistles of John, The New International Commentary on the NT: Eerdmans, 1978)</li> <li>■ J E McDermond (First John-Believers Church Bible Commentary)</li> <li>■ Monty Mills (Letters from John : a Study Guide to I, II and III John; 3E Ministries. 1997)</li> <li>■ John Piper (<a href="#">1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God</a>)</li> <li>■ David Smith (<a href="#">Expositor's Greek Testament</a>)</li> <li>■ John R. W. Stott (The Letters of John: Eerdmans, 1964)</li> <li>■ John Trapp (Commentary on the Epistles and Revelation)</li> <li>■ Bob Utley (<a href="#">1 John 1 Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Marvin Vincent (<a href="#">1 John Word Studies in the NT</a>)</li> <li>■ W E Vine (Collected Writings, Nelson. 1997)</li> <li>■ B F. Westcott (<a href="#">1 John 1 Commentary</a> Eerdmans, 1966).</li> <li>■ Kenneth Wuest (<a href="#">Word Studies from the Greek NT</a>)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Thomas Constable (<a href="#">1 John Expository Notes</a>)</li> <li>■ Michael Eaton (Focus Commentary)</li> <li>■ Guy H. King, (<a href="#">The Pleasure of the Fellowship</a> 1954).</li> <li>■ Charles Ryrie (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)</li> <li>■ David Guzik (<a href="#">1 John Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Zane Hodges (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)</li> <li>■ J. Dwight Pentecost (The Joy of Fellowship, 1977)</li> <li>■ Grant Richison (<a href="#">Verse by Verse Commentary</a>)</li> <li>■ Ray Stedman (<a href="#">Man Who Ignores Light</a>)</li> </ul> |
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## THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING THE TEXT REPEATEDLY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Remember that in order to most accurately interpret any portion of Scripture, one needs to repeatedly read (prayerfully and carefully with meticulous observation) the surrounding text in order to assure that the context (and the author's flow of thought) is clearly grasped. Otherwise, one is in danger of interpreting the passage erroneously. Those writers who favor John's purpose is to give the believing readers a series of tests by which they can evaluate their fellowship invoke 1John 1:3 to support that premise. Those who favor John's purpose is to give several tests of one's salvation refer to his purpose statement in 1John 5:13. Let's look at a few of the verses in the next chapter (the context). As you read these passages, ask God's Spirit to help you determine, does what this passage is describing relate to fellowship (sanctification) or to assurance of salvation...

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

is not in him (1Jn 2:3)

the one who **says** he abides in Him ought himself to **walk** in the same manner as He walked.

The one who **says** he is in the light and yet **hates** his brother is in the darkness until now. (1Jn 2:9)

**Do you notice a pattern?** John repeatedly associates what one **says** with what one **does** or how one behaves. John certainly seems to want to make sure we are who we say we are, as determined by how we live. Now, does that sound like John wants his readers to be sure of their fellowship or their salvation? How do you know what a person really believes? James would say the way to know is by their "works." John the Baptist and Jesus would say the way to know is by their "fruits." So if one's "works" or "fruits" include not keeping God's commandments, not walking as Jesus walked and hating one's brother, does that sound like a believer who is just "out of fellowship" or does it sound like one who professes to believe but has no evidence the new birth that would give him assurance of eternal life? If you're still not sure, then I would suggest reading First John over several more times, looking at the repeated words which give you a clue to John's flow of thought and his purpose for writing this letter. Then you can read the commentary notes and decide whether they are an accurate interpretation of the text.

**Dr. Wayne Barber** writes that...

The Apostle John begins in verse 6 and goes all the way through the book contrasting what people say and what they live as being two different things. He is saying, "These are Christians. These aren't." Do you want to know what a Christian is? I am going to call them forth and put them on the witness stand and it won't be by what they say, it will definitely be by how they live. Look at 1Jn 1:6. In verses 1Jn 1:6-10 he has three false statements, then he has the truth that contrasts that and he shows you the evidence that will prove you to be guilty if you claim to be a child of God.

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

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

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

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

I personally am going to have to side with the second. I believe what he is doing is drawing a contrast. I don't think he is talking right here to the fact that believers can go off and live consistently in sin and then claim to have a relationship, just no fellowship at the time. Now certainly my fellowship is strained when sin gets into my life. But we are talking about habitual, present tense, lifestyle of sin. That would agree with chapter 3 which

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

2Corinthians 5:17 says,

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

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

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

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

As noted some writers like David Guzik feel that John's subject is "fellowship, not salvation." Then Guzik states that "The Christian who temporarily walks in darkness is still saved, but not in fellowship with God." While I respect Guzik's commentary, his statement "temporarily walks" cannot be substantiated from the verb tense John uses for "walk". To the contrary, John's use of the **present tense** pictures this hypothetical walk as continual and not just a "temporary slip" which characterizes even believers. In fact Guzik himself goes on to make another comment (with which I completely agree) on verse 6 observing that "*a walk in darkness* (indicates) *a pattern of living*. *This does not speak of an occasional lapse, but of a lifestyle of darkness*." (Bolding mine) Webster says that the word "**pattern**" is a "*a reliable sample of traits, acts, tendencies, or other observable characteristics of a person*!" Beloved, how can a person whose "*pattern of living*" is to continually walk in darkness be considered a child of the light? How can one who continually behaves this way expect to have any assurance of salvation, which John desires for his readers (1John 5:13)? It is important to note that John repeatedly and purposefully associates **what one says** with **how one lives**. John wants us his readers to know who they really are in the spiritual realm, by how they conduct themselves in the physical realm.

**John Piper** explains that

When you walk in darkness, you are controlled by the desires for the soft, warm underbellies of prestige and power and two-second pleasures (see Jas 4:14). This is the very opposite of what it means to have fellowship with God. Fellowship with God means that you see things the way He sees them and have the same desires He has. If we are controlled by desires for the world instead of desires for God, it doesn't matter whether we say we have fellowship with God or not; we don't have it. Instead we walk in darkness. ([1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God](#))

**The IVP Bible Commentary** puts it like this

Light and darkness are opposites, and repel each other. One cannot have fellowship with God with one foot in darkness and one in light, since God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. Darkness and light are two opposing forces, each making their competing claims upon us.

First let us recall the context that John has just presented the truth that God is light. John is fond of emphasizing his statements by restating them in negative form and so he adds that "In Him there is no darkness at all." In other words John is stating as strongly as he can, the contrast between God and darkness. Note that John does not speak about the origin of the darkness. That is not his point. His main thrust is to emphasize that living in the darkness is absolutely incompatible with fellowship with God. John is using light and darkness primarily in the ethical sense. In other words, he is saying that "God is good and evil can have no place beside Him." (Howard Marshall)

Remember to whom John is writing and why he is writing. Some would say the letter is all about fellowship but notice what John himself states in chapter 5...

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life (1 Jn 5:13)

**Comment: To whom is John writing?** Clearly this letter is addressed to believers, not to unbelievers (cp the "identity" of those addressed in 1Jn 2:1, 2:12, 13, 14). **What is John's main purpose for writing?** This verse is a clear statement of his purpose. John wants his readers to be sure of their salvation (Compare 1Jn 2:3ff, 21). In a day when a majority of Americans say they have been "born again", one can see how First John would be so relevant to our times.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT SAYING ONE THING AND DOING ANOTHER!

**If** (1437) (**ean**) is a preposition which serves to identify what is referred to in Greek as a third class conditional clause. It means "(If) ... and it may be true or may not be true." There is a supposition (something that is supposed) where the reality of the issue is uncertain. A conditional clause in Greek is formed by combining a preposition with a certain verb mood. In this case **ean** is combined with the **subjunctive mood** which is the mood of probability ("**we say**" is in the subjunctive mood) which implies uncertainty. In the context of this letter, the most reasonable interpretation is that there were false teachers amongst the believers who were making and/or teaching these claims. **Marshall** adds that "*It is probable that these claims were real statements made by people in the church to which John was writing, and that they reflect the outlook of the people who were causing trouble in the church.*"

This is the first of seven clauses introduced by "if" in 1Jn 1:5-1Jn 2:6.

**Alfred Plummer** summarizes John's uses of "if" writing that...

With great gentleness he puts the case hypothetically, and with great delicacy he includes himself in the hypothesis. This 'if we' continues in almost every verse until 1Jn 2:3, after which it is changed into the equivalent 'he that', which continues down to 1Jn 2:11; after that neither form is used. This is one of several indications that from 1Jn 1:6 to 1Jn 2:11 is a definite division of the Epistle, based upon the introductory verse, 1Jn 1:5. With 1Jn 2:12 there is a new departure.

The first two "if" clauses, (1Jn 1:6) ***If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness*** and (1Jn 1:7) ***but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light***, are in contrasting parallelism. 1Jn 1:6 expresses the negative and 1Jn 1:7 counters with the positive.

**We say** (2036) (**epo**) is the first person plural which indicates that John is including himself in this suppositional statement. Some would take this as evidence that what follows does not apply to the distinction of believers versus unbelievers.

**Sam Storms** addresses this question of how John can use "we" in 1Jn 1:6-10 in passages that describe the lifestyle of non-believers (since John is obviously not a non-believer)...

In 1Jn 1:1-1Jn 1:5 John uses "we" 13x. In 1Jn 1:6-10 "we" is used 12x. The "we" of vv. 1-5 refers to the apostles (1Jn 1:1). But whom does the "we" of vv. 6-10 include? Some say the apostles, as in vv. 1-5. It would seem, however, that a shift has occurred as John begins his application of the tests of authentic Christianity. I take the "we" in vv. 6-10 to be what is known as the preacher's "we". **Stott** explains:

The author does clearly identify himself with his readers in many parts of the Epistle, as a preacher does with his congregation in a sermon... In these (and other) 'we' sentences the author is neither speaking editorially nor associating himself with the other apostles but identifying himself with the whole Christian community, or at least with his readers.

I.e., John is simply stating general principles which are applicable to all men equally. This kind of *preacher's we* is often heard in the pulpit. E.g., "*If we reject the claims of Christ we will be eternally lost, but if we trust Christ as our Savior we will be eternally saved.*" The "we" really means anyone, but in order to associate with his readers he uses "we". Cf. also 1Jn 2:9-11,22 ("the one who") and 1Jn 2:23,29; 3:3,4 ("everyone who").

In support of the interpretation that "we" in 1Jn 1:6-10 is a reference to men in general ("applicable to all men equally") notice that John switches from **we** to other ways of identifying those who make false claims. In other words John gives us a number of descriptions of men who say one thing and do another. **Observe** that John's phrase "**we say**" occurs only in 1Jn 1:6, 8, 10. John then changes to "**one who says**" (1Jn 2:4, 6, 9) and to "**If someone says...**" in 1Jn 4:20. **Observe** that in each of these instances John makes a "positive" statement regarding the faith followed by a negative behavior which in effect "contradicts" this person's positive claim. John repeatedly describes those who **say** one thing and **do** another.

JOHN'S COMPARISON OF WORDS VS DEEDS		
THE SCRIPTURE	WHAT ONE SAYS (THEIR CLAIM)	WHAT ONE DOES (THEIR LIFESTYLE)
1John 1:6	"We have fellowship with God"	Walk in Darkness
1John 2:4	"I know Jesus"	Does not keep commandments
1John 2:6	"I abide in Jesus"	Must walk like Jesus
1John 2:9	"I am in the light"	Hates his brother
1John 4:20	"I love God"	Hates his brother

**McDermond** writes that rather than **"if we say"**...

a better translation here would be **when** (or whenever) **we say**. This translation suggests, as many commentators recognize, that a group is actually claiming to be in fellowship with God even while their lives point to a different reality. Clearly John writes these opening words because some influential person or group is **claiming** to be a model of how to relate to God, and yet the reality of their **lifestyle** leads the believing observer to draw the opposite conclusion. (McDermond, J. E.: 1 John--Commentaries: Believers Church Bible Commentary) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Henry Alford** explains that...

The first person plural ("we") gives to the sayings a more general form, precluding any from escaping from the inference: at the same time that by including himself in the hypothesis, the Apostle descends to the level of his readers, thus giving to his exhortations the **"come,"** and not **"go,"** which ever (always) wins men's hearts the most. ([1 John 1 Commentary](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Harris**...

The phrase **practicing the truth** means living out the truth in a lifestyle obedient to God. The most important parallel is John 3:20, 21, where we are told *"Everyone who does [= practices] evil hates the light and does not come to the light...but the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God."* The problem with the opponents lies not with their boast that they have fellowship with God, but with their contradictory behavior—they continue walking in the darkness.

**Bob Utley**...

The heretics claimed that fellowship was based on knowledge only (Ed: Gnosticism ~ gnosis = knowledge). This was an aspect of Greek philosophy from Plato. However, John asserts that Christians must live Christlike lives (cf. v. 7; Lev. 19:2; 20:7; Mt 5:48).

**McDermond** comments that...

The first portion of 1Jn 1:6 highlights this inconsistency. The claim is that some see themselves in **fellowship** with God. In just the previous verse (1Jn 1:5) the point is made that **God is light**, meaning authentic and good, and there is no darkness in him. Therefore one may (or might) assume that those people claiming fellowship are authentic and good as well. But as the author reflects on their lives, he concludes differently. They are walking in darkness. (McDermond, J. E.: 1 John--Commentaries: Believers Church Bible Commentary)

**Fellowship** ([2842](#)) (**koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common, belonging to several or of which several are partakers) describes the experience of having something in common and/or of sharing things in common with others. It describes a close association involving mutual interests and sharing or to have communion (Which Webster defines communion as "intimate fellowship") It denotes the active, joint participation, cooperation and/or sharing in a common interest or activity.

John's intended meaning of **fellowship** in this context is one of several keys which will guide our interpretation of not just this section of the letter and for that matter the entire letter. **Fellowship** in 1John 1:6 could refer either to the initial salvation experience

or to the subsequent sharing of common interests that follows regeneration (the time referred to as sanctification). The question is whether there are any NT examples of koinonia which refer specifically to the initial salvation experience? Let's observe Paul's statement in First Corinthians...

God is faithful, through Whom you were called into **fellowship** with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1Cor 1:9)

**Comment:** This passage clearly refers to the initial salvation experience of the Corinthians. **Calling** is an integral component of our salvation experience. When we entered the New Covenant by grace through faith, we entered into a union, a oneness, a common (koinonia - from koinos = that which is in common) life with Christ, Who in fact is now the believer's life (Col 3:4) through His indwelling, ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:9). This initial "communion" experience with God results in a new spiritual position, "positional" fellowship if you will. In our unregenerate state, we were in Adam, but at regeneration God's Spirit placed us in Christ, into our new position of union with Him. Positional fellowship is of course followed by experiential (relational) fellowship on a day to day basis, but there has to be that initial moment of supernatural "communion" ("fellowship") at the time of conversion. Almost every commentary agrees that koinonia in 1Corinthians 1:9 refers to the the sharing in common that occurs when one is born again.

**Bob Utley on "koinonia" in 1Cor 1:9 adds that:** God has called us to be in union with His Son both positionally and relationally... Believer's lifestyles after they meet Christ are evidence of their salvation.

**The United Bible Society Handbook:** Perhaps the most important word in this verse is the one that RSV and TEV translate fellowship. REB replaces this noun by a verb having the same meaning: "to share in the life of his Son." "Share in," of course, simply means "participate in." The text implies that the fellowship into which God calls Christians is the fellowship or communion that he himself has with his Son. So the word that translators use here should not refer specifically to the kind of fellowship that Christians have with one another in the church. (Ellingworth, Paul; et al; A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians)

**Expositor's Greek Testament** says "koinonia" in this verse does not mean... "into a communion (or partnership) with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"... , but "into a communion belonging to (and named after) God's Son," of which He is founder, centre and sum.

**Gordon Fee:** The reference is to what took place at their conversion. The calling to Christ is a calling to be in fellowship with Christ through the Spirit (cf. 2Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1). Thus in all likelihood this language is to be understood not only positionally, but also relationally. Believers are not only in Christ, and as such freed from the guilt of their sins, but are also in fellowship with Christ, and as such are privileged to commune with him through the Spirit. (The First Epistle to the Corinthians - The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

In summary, clearly koinonia is used elsewhere in the NT in the context of initial salvation thus John's use of koinonia here in 1John 1:6 could refer to initial salvation. Let's state it this way -- one cannot exclude that John is referring to the initial salvation experience in the phrase **"If we say we have fellowship with Him."**

**Adam Clarke** commenting on 1John 1:6 makes the point that

Having fellowship, **koinonia**, communion, with God, necessarily implies a partaking of the Divine nature.

Listen to what the venerable preacher **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** has to say about **fellowship**...

When we were united by faith to Christ, we were brought into such complete fellowship with Him, that we were made one with Him, and His interests and ours became mutual and identical. (**Ed comment: Notice that Spurgeon associates faith in Christ which brings us into oneness with Him as synonymous with fellowship with Christ. In other words even as there is an initial salvation experience, there is an initial experience of fellowship, which then like salvation becomes our lifestyle, to share His love, His desires, His sufferings, His joys.**)

**We have fellowship with Christ in His love** What He loves we love. He loves the saints-so do we. He loves sinners-so do we. He loves the poor perishing race of man, and pants to see earth's deserts transformed into the garden of the Lord-so do we.

**We have fellowship with Him in His desires.** He desires the glory of God-we also labor for the same. He desires that the saints may be with Him where He is-we desire to be with Him there too. He desires to drive out sin-behold we fight under His banner. He desires that his Father's Name may be loved and adored by all His creatures-we pray daily, "Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven."

**We have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings** We are not nailed to the cross, nor do we die a cruel death, but when He is reproached, we are reproached; and a very sweet thing it is to be blamed for His sake, to be despised for following the Master, to have the world against us. The disciple should not be above his Lord. In our measure we commune with him in His labors, ministering to men by the Word of Truth and by deeds of love. Our meat and our drink, like His, is to do the will of Him Who hath sent us and to finish His work.

**We have also fellowship with Christ in His joys** We are happy in His happiness, we rejoice in His exaltation. Have you ever tasted that joy, believer? There is no purer or more thrilling delight to be known this side heaven than that of having Christ's joy fulfilled in us, that our joy may be full.

His glory awaits us to complete our fellowship, for His Church shall sit with Him upon His throne, as His well-beloved bride and queen.

**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, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament)

**Tyndale Bible Dictionary** succinctly defines **fellowship** as...

Communion with God, which results in common participation with other believers in the Spirit of God and God's blessings. [Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. Tyndale Bible Dictionary. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers](#))

**With Him** - with God. The unique **fellowship** between Father and Son began in eternity, was manifested itself in time through the incarnation of Jesus, was introduced to the apostles, and then introduced to every believer via the ministry of indwelling Spirit of Christ (2Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1, Ro 8:9).

As **John Stott** explains the believer's fellowship with God 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.

## **WALKING IN DARKNESS**

**William MacDonald**

A man who says he has fellowship with Him and habitually walks in darkness was never saved at all.

**W E Vine**

The conditions thus laid down serve to distinguish actual possession from mere profession. There is an intimation of what the apostle develops more fully in the body of the epistle, namely, the distinguishing mark which differentiates the children of God from the children of the devil (see 3:10). In this passage the distinction is between walking in darkness and walking in the light. The former is the condition of the unregenerate, the latter of those who are related to Him who is light (1Jn 1:5). To walk in the light we must be partakers of His nature. The word rendered "walk" suggests the habitual or constant course of life.

**Monty Mills** comments that...

The purpose of this section (1Jn 1:5-7) is to stress that the change in the believer's lifestyle is a proof of the fact that he has indeed been cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ and that therefore he has fellowship with God. (Letters from John : a Study Guide to I, II and III John; 3E Ministries. 1997)

**Jim Bomkamp** lists the following indicators or marks of a genuine believer from John's first chapter...

1. Walks in the light - 1Jn 1:6
2. Has fellowship with other Christians who walk in the light - 1Jn 1:7
3. Believes he has a sin nature - 1Jn 1:8
4. Occasionally sins - 1Jn 1:10

[\(34 Marks of a True Christian in 1 John\)](#).

Listen to **Dr. John Piper's** concluding remarks from his sermon on 1John 1:5-10...

Some people think that the only way to make the Gospel really good news is to deny that changes are necessary in our lives. They say that takes away the possibility of assurance of salvation. They say the way we live after putting our faith in Christ has nothing to do with our salvation. I answer that a powerless Gospel is not good news. A Gospel that only wins lip service is not different than all the other philosophies of the world. Such a Gospel produces a Christianity that is a game of words. It encourages lukewarm church-goers that they are safe from God's wrath because of some inherited mental assent to the love of God. Such a Gospel accounts for how 40 million people can claim to be born again in America at the same time that our moral condition is an all time low of corruption inside and outside the church.

**The message of 1 John—that walking in the light is not optional, but necessary for salvation—is good news because it creates the moral atmosphere of urgency in which serious business is done with God.**

It gives the flavor of eternity to all we say and do. It militates against religious gamesmanship. It honors the purpose of God in Christ to destroy the works of the devil. It takes seriously the necessity of glorifying God in our bodies.

**It leads people to real faith instead of encouraging them to be content with a lip service that cannot change and cannot save.**

But in the end it simply is not up to us to decide whether the Gospel is the kind of good news we would like it to be. Ours is simply to listen and submit to the Word of God. And the Word of God says that **"if we walk in the light as he is in the light ... the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."** If we walk in darkness, we cut ourselves off from the cleansing effects of Christ's blood. And if we cut ourselves off from Christ's blood, where will hope be found! (Bolding added for emphasis). ([let-us-walk-in-the-light-of-god](#))

If we **say**... if we **walk** - Observe the clear juxtaposition by John of what we **say** with what we actually **do**! In this context John is saying that some were in effect saying that sin does not matter.

**Walk** (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk around, to go here and there in walking, to tread all around. The 39 uses in the Gospels refer to literal walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21). When we come to the epistles of Paul **peripateo** is used only in the metaphorical sense referring to the conduct of one's life, the ordering of one's behavior. John also frequently uses **peripateo** in the figurative sense referring to one's ordinary course of life (1Jn 2:6, 11; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 3, 4; Rev. 21:24; John 8:12).

**Alford** stating that the verb **peripateo**...

as so often in N. T., (speaks) of the whole being and moving and turning in the world ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

**Uteley**...

This is a biblical metaphor expressing a moral lifestyle (cf. Eph.4:1, 17; 5:2, 15). God is light with no darkness. His children should be like Him (cf. Mt 5:48).

**Plummer** comments that the meaning of walk in the present tense...

expresses not merely action, but habitual action. A life in moral darkness can no more have communion with God, than a life in a coal-pit can have communion with the sun. For 'what communion hath light with darkness?' (2Cor. 6:4). Light can be shut out, but it cannot be shut in. Some Gnostics taught, not merely that to the illuminated (**Ed**: intellectually enlightened) all conduct was alike, but that to reach the highest form of illumination (**Ed**: "enlightenment") men must experience every kind of action, however abominable, in order to work themselves free from the powers that rule the world

As **John Stott** says

The present tense in the Greek verb implied habit, continuity, unbroken sequence.

**McDermond** adds that...

Here **walk** is in the present subjunctive in the phrase while we are walking, suggesting that this possible condition is a continuous or habitual pattern of behavior, and that such people are repeatedly and consistently choosing darkness over the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ (see 1Jn 1:1-4). (Ibid)

**John Butler**...

One of the heresies of that day was the idea that you could live in sin and at the same time be in fellowship with God. For “fellowship” to occur one must have things in common with the one with whom he wants to fellowship. Therefore a person cannot live willfully in sin and have things in common with God Who is holy. Those who claim to have fellowship with God and who live unholy lives are fakers. They are not real believers. (Analytical Bible Expositor: 1, 2, 3 John & Jude)

Harris...

The significance of the present tense of *peripatōmen* (“keep on walking”) in 1Jn 1:6. The context of this statement in 1:6 indicates clearly that the progressive (sometimes called continuative, or durative) use of the present tense, one of its most common uses, must be in view here. The relationship of (*peripatōmen*) to (*eipōmen*) is of particular importance for understanding the problem expressed in 1:6. We have already noted above that the first (*kai*, “and yet”) in 1:6 has adversative force. If someone should say (*eipōmen*) that he has fellowship with God, **and yet** continues walking (*peripatōmen*) in the darkness, **then it follows** (as expressed in the apodosis of the conditional sentence) that such a person is lying and not practicing the truth. The author almost certainly has the claims of the opponents in view here.

The background of the light/darkness motif introduced in 1:6. The author’s problem with the claim of the opponents lies not with the boast that they have fellowship with God, but with their contradictory behavior: they continue walking “in the darkness” at the same time they are making the claim to have fellowship with God. To the author this proves conclusively that they are lying, as the author points out in the apodosis (1:6b). The contrast with light occurs because the opponents claim to have fellowship with God, who has been characterized as “light” in 1:5.

The light/darkness motif in Johannine theology. In the Old Testament God is compared with light on several occasions (e.g., Ps 27:1; 36:9). The contrast between light and darkness is also a major theme in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 1:9–10). The light/darkness motif occurs in a number of places in the New Testament (cf., for example, Eph 5:6–8), but it is especially evident in the Johannine literature. It is an important theme of the prologue to the Gospel of John, especially 1:5. One of the most important sections of the Gospel, containing the key to a number of themes within it, is 3:16–21. In 3:19 we are told that people “loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.” The author goes on to state in 3:20 that “everyone who practices evil hates the light” and refuses to come to it, because of fear that his evil deeds will be exposed for what they are. Finally in 3:21 the one who “practices the truth” (same phrase as 1 John 1:6) comes to the light. The picture painted by John 3:16–21 is one where one’s affinity for ‘light’ and ‘darkness’ serves to reveal one’s inner nature. One is forced to a decision to ally oneself with one side or the other. A response is evoked; one cannot just remain neutral. Either one comes to the light, and it becomes evident that one belongs there, or one hates the light and shrinks back into the darkness to hide from it. The imagery of response used in John 3:16–21 applies to an individual’s response to Jesus himself, who is identified as “the true Light” in John 1:4 and who identifies himself as “the Light of the world” in John 8:12.

The significance of the light/darkness motif in 1 John 1:6. Because of the central role this theme plays in the Gospel of John, it is almost certainly behind the introduction of the motif in 1 John 1:6. The opponents, who profess that they have “come to the light” (using the language of John 3) have not in reality done so, and for the author of 1 John their deeds prove it, because they are continuing to “walk in darkness.” Rather, their way of life (“walking”) demonstrates that they are lying in their claim to have fellowship with God who is light.

**In the darkness** (en to skotei) - Notice John says “in” not “according to”.

**Plummer** - ‘In darkness’ should probably be in the darkness: in vv. 6, 7, as in 2:8, 9, 11, both light and darkness have the article in the Greek, which is not merely generic but emphatic; that which is light indeed is opposed to that which is darkness indeed. In 2 Cor. 6:14, ‘What communion hath light with darkness?’, neither word has the article.

**Darkness** (4655) (**skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. As most of know all too well by personal experience, the absence of light leaves room for evil and sin. In this sense **darkness** may be described as evil.

**Skotos** can refer to literal darkness as occurred on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion (Mt 27:45) or darkness as opposed to light in the creation (2Cor 4:6).

**Skotos** is used as another name for the place of punishment, eternal misery and eternal separation from God (**the meaning of skotos here in 2Peter**) .

**Skotos** is used by John here in 1John 1:6 (and 1Jn 2:8, 9, 11) with the figurative meaning of **spiritual or moral darkness** (including a lack of understanding) as in the following examples

"(Jesus declared) And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the **darkness** rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

"(the gospel would) to open their eyes so that they may turn from **darkness** to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18)

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth (truth is not only something we should believe and teach but also something we should practice, otherwise our life is a "lie") (1John 1:6)

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of **darkness**, but instead even expose them; (Ephesians 5:11-note)

For He (the Father) delivered us from the domain of **darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (Col 1:13-note)

**Comment:** We have been set free from the right and the might (domain) of darkness, here darkness personified as a place that exerts absolute power over those it imprisons! Why would we want to walk back into that dark place of spiritual bondage?

The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of **darkness** and put on the armor of light. (Ro 13:12-note)

**Comment:** Saying we have fellowship with God and yet making "dark" choices and walking in the darkness is one of the **deeds of darkness**!

#### C H Spurgeon comments...

Mark here, this does not mean walking in the darkness of sorrow, for there are many of God's people that walk in the darkness of doubts and fears, and yet they have fellowship with God; nay, they sometimes have fellowship with Christ all the better for the darkness of the path along which they walk, but the darkness here meant is the darkness of sin, the darkness of untruthfulness. If I walk in a lie, or walk in sin, and then profess to have fellowship with God, I have lied, and do not the truth.

#### The Full Life Study Bible comments...

To "walk in the darkness" means to live outside of God's truth and a personal relationship with him. It means to reject God's standards and pursue one's own direction toward selfish and immoral pleasure. People who live this way do not "have fellowship with him," and are "not born of God" (cf. 1John 3:7-9; Jn 3:19; 2Co 6:14). Their actions show that they do not have a saving relationship with God. But those who have accepted God's forgiveness and the opportunity to have true companionship with Christ experience his favor, help and strength to live in spiritual purity and to do what is right by God's standard (1Jn 1:7; 2:4; 3:10).

#### WE LIE AND DO NOT PRACTICE THE TRUTH: pseudometha (1PPM/PI) kai ou poioumen (1PPAI) ten aletheian

- **we lie:** 1Jn 1:10 4:20 Jn 8:44,45 1Ti 4:2
- **do not:** Jn 3:21
- [1 John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Compare these other passages in First John that deal with lying...

The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is **aliar**, and the **truth** is not in him (1Jn 2:4)

I have not written to you because you do not know the **truth**, but because you do know it, and because no **lie** is of the truth. (1Jn 2:21)

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is **true** and is **not a lie**, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (1Jn 2:27)

Although the word "**lie**" is not used, the principle practiced is the same in this passage...

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1Jn 4:1)

Now, as you compare Scripture with Scripture, do these passages that speak of lying help you interpret John's statement '**we lie and do not practice the truth**'? Notice the repeated contrast between **truth** and **lie**.

**We lie** (5574) (**pseudomai** from **pseudo** = to cheat, defraud, falsify) means to communicate what is false, with the evident purpose of misleading. In the context of this verse, the one we are misleading is ourselves! Self deception! The Greek term and the English equivalent 'to lie' involve more than simply telling what is not true, for this could occur without an intent to deceive or mislead. It means means to tell a falsehood, attempt to deceive by lying, to speak falsely or deceitfully. In the present context John is saying in essence that we lie by our actions. And thus we might say one thing with our lips but another with our life! **Pseúdomai** therefore involves not only the communication of a falsehood but also the intent to deceive (cp our intrinsic ability to even deceive ourselves - Jer 17:9 cp Heb 3:12, 13-note)

**Plummer on "we lie, and do not the truth"...**

Antithetic parallelism, as in v. 5. The negative statement here carries us further than the positive one: it includes conduct as well as speech. See on John 3:21, where 'doing the truth' is opposed to 'practising evil'. It is also the opposite of 'doing a lie' (Rev. 21:27, 22:15).

**Wiersbe** comments that ...

Light produces life and growth and beauty, but sin is darkness; and darkness and light cannot exist in the same place. If we are walking in the light, the darkness has to go. If we are holding to sin, then the light goes. There is no middle ground, no vague "gray" area, where sin is concerned...

One of the first symptoms of walking in darkness is a loss of blessing from the Bible. You cannot read the Word profitably while you are walking in the dark. But a dishonest person loses something else: he loses his fellowship with God and with God's people (1 John 1:6-7). As a result, prayer becomes an empty form to him. Worship is dull routine. He becomes critical of other Christians and starts staying away from church: "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2Cor 6:14)...

One problem with dishonesty is that just keeping a record of our lies and pretenses is a full-time job! Abraham Lincoln used to say that if a man is going to be a liar, he had better have a good memory! When a person uses up all his energy in pretending, he has nothing left for living; and life becomes shallow and tasteless. A person who pretends not only robs himself of reality, but he keeps himself from growing: his true self is smothered under the false self. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament. Victor](#))

**We lie and do not practice the truth** - The Pulpit Commentary has "we are false both in word and deed." As noted elsewhere both verbs (*lie* and *practice*) are in the **present tense** which can be paraphrased...

### **"We habitually lie and continually do not practice the truth."**

It seems inconceivable to me that some commentators consider this individual to be a genuine Christian and explain that he or she is simply not in fellowship with God. Sure, all genuine believers lie occasionally, **BUT** genuine Christians do not lie as their general lifestyle. All Christians fail to practice the truth, **BUT** genuine Christians do not fail to practice the truth as their habitual practice!

### **THE TRUTH ABOUT LYING**

It also seems that John considers the habitual practice of lying a very serious matter which should cause the practitioner to do some deep soul searching including meditating on John's passages that describe the eternal destiny of habitual liars.

In the near context in chapter 2 John makes another strong statement writing that...

The one who **says**, "I have come to know (ginosko in the perfect tense = They claim to have come to know Jesus at some point in time in the past and they still know Him) Him," and **does** not keep (present tense - as their general practice - not perfection but general direction) His commandments, is (present tense) a **liar** (peustes), and the truth is (present tense) not (the Greek indicates absolute negation) in him (1Jn 2:4)

**Question:** Beloved, does this sound like the description of a believer who is simply not experiencing fellowship with Jesus? Or is this the description of someone who claims to know Jesus but does not really know Him? Sure they may *know about* Jesus (that would apply to most people in America), but they *don't really know* Him *intimately*. They know about Jesus like someone knows about Abraham Lincoln but does not really know him by personal acquaintance. And beloved, one's soul will not be saved by just knowing about Christ. The only saving knowledge is to know Him by trusting in Him as Lord and Savior (Ro 10:9, 10-note, compare the dreadful fate of those who think they know Him in Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note. Note that Jesus also uses the same verb [ginosko] that this individual does in 1Jn 2:4 for "know" - know by experience! Can you imagine the horror of those who claimed to "know" Jesus in their life, only to hear His solemn words "I never [ever] knew [ginosko] you depart from me, you who practice [present tense = habitually practice] lawlessness.")

Notice once again that John associates what this person **says** with what he actually **does**. John seems intent on getting across the point that you can **say** you are a Christian "until you're blue in the face" (to use an old expression which emphasizes one's persistence in making this claim), but unless there is evidence in your life by what you **do** or how you behave (in this case keep the the Lord's commandments - not perfection, but direction!), then John says you are a liar! That is strong language. If John walked up to someone and told them they were a liar, that would (or at least should) be cause for serious concern, especially in light of what John teaches about all liars who practice lying in the Revelation of Jesus Christ (see below).

Later in chapter 2 John asks...

Who is the **liar** but the one who denies (present tense) that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (1John 2:22)

**Comment:** Anyone who denies that Jesus is the promised Messiah is an antichrist, one who opposes Christ!

In chapter 4 John again addresses the issue of lying stating plainly that...

If someone says, "I love (present tense - continually love) God," and hates (present tense - continually hates) his brother, he is (present tense) a **liar**; for the one who does not love (present tense) his brother whom he has seen, cannot (absolutely cannot) love God Whom he has not seen. (1John 4:20)

**Comment:** Once again note John's pattern of comparing **what one says** with **what one does** as their general practice, their general lifestyle. Read that verse again -- does that sound like a believer?

The Apostle John links **lying** and **practicing** twice in the Revelation in his description of the moral characteristics of those who will not be allowed into heaven! Perhaps this John wanted to make sure the readers of his epistle were not deceived by their lifestyle of lying and not practicing the truth (1Jn 1:6b)!

(John speaking of heaven) and nothing unclean and no one who **practices** (poieo in the present tense) abomination and **lying** (pseudos = noun), shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev 21:27)

(John repeats practicing lying!) Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves (present tense) and **practices** (poieo in the present tense) **lying** (pseudos = noun). (Rev 22:15)

John also mentions **lying** again in Revelation 21 linking it with the liar's eternal destiny...

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and **all liars** (pseudos = adjective)( their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev 21:8)

In summary, these passages from the pen of John strongly support the premise that lying is a very serious issue, one that clearly can impact one's eternal destiny. Thus when John says that when we walk in the darkness continually we are in effect practicing lying, that should be a cause of serious concern. In my opinion, that hardly sounds like the description of a genuine believer! Sure all believers are guilty from time to time of "little white lies" (a misnomer, because all sin is an abomination to "God [Who] is light"). But genuine believers do not continually lie as their lifestyle.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT NOT PRACTICING THE TRUTH

**Do not practice the truth** - "**Not**" is the Greek word "**ou**" which signifies absolute negation. John is saying that when one walks habitually in darkness, they *absolutely* do not practice the truth. There is no middle ground. You either do or you don't practice the truth. Don't be deceived! Sure, all believers have times when they do not do the truth, but that is not their habitual practice or lifestyle. Believers are new creatures in Christ (2Cor 5:17), and have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and now have a new desires and a new power to carry out those desires. Believers don't practice the truth about them perfectly, but they do practice them as the general direction of their life (toward heaven, not hell!) As I like to say, we are speaking of direction, not perfection. If someone's life is continually in the darkness, then can they possibly claim to have fellowship with "God (Who) is light" (1Jn 1:5)? Such a claim is preposterous, and anyone who believes that they can live like the devil and be assured of living eternally with Jesus is simply deceiving themselves. They have bought into the lie that John is addressing in this epistle, the lie that says you can live anyway you want to live and still think you are an authentic, born again, regenerate person, who has Christ in them, who has His Holy Spirit indwelling them, and yet who continually lives an unholy life. John wants to counter this dangerous deception, which is why he is writing these statements about those who say one thing and do another (1John 5:13).

Using a basic rule of good hermeneutics that Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture, it is notable that the only other use of the phrase "**practice truth**" is by the apostle John in his Gospel in a passage which is clearly in the context of salvation (See Jesus' teaching on belief and salvation in John 3:16, 17, 18, 19). John records the words of our Lord Jesus Christ...

For everyone who does (prasso in present tense = continually practices) evil hates (present tense) the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices (poieo in present tense = continually does) the truth comes (present tense) to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. (John 3:20-21)

**Comment:** One who habitually (the text does not say "perfectly") or generally practices the truth is regenerate (born again), their deeds clearly manifesting (revealing for all to see) what they are in their heart. First John 1:6 states that a person who habitually walks in darkness also does not practice truth as their lifestyle. Comparing this person with John's definition of a believer using almost identical wording, it is very reasonable to interpret those who "do not practice the truth" as unregenerate individuals.

**Harris agrees commenting:** The phrase **practicing the truth** means living out the truth in a lifestyle obedient to God. The most important parallel is John 3:20, 21, where we are told "*Everyone who does [= practices] evil hates the light and does not come to the light...but the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God.*" The problem with the opponents lies not with their boast that they have fellowship with God, but with their contradictory behavior—they continue walking in the darkness.

**Practice (4160) (poieo)** means to do or to accomplish and is in the **present tense** in this passage, indicating that this failure to practice truth is one's lifestyle or continual practice. In other words, John is describing a person who is "living a lie" (a hypocrite) which is another way of saying this person is not a genuine believer.

As **Wiersbe** says this person "is playing a role and acting a part, but is not living a genuine life. He is insincere."

In short, John is saying it does not matter **what you say you believe**, but **what you show you believe** by what you do, by how you live. If you say you believe and your live matches your lips then that is clearly a strong indication that your belief is genuine. John desires that his readers have **assurance of their salvation** (1John 5:13). On the other hand he wants to make sure that anyone who calls themselves a Christian and lives like the devil (a liar from the beginning) is not deceived into thinking they are just out of fellowship. John clearly believers habitual liars are not just out of fellowship, but out of the presence of the God of light for all eternity! Serious consequences call for strong language, and John is up to the task.

**Brooke** says it this way "Speaking" the truth is only one part of "doing" the truth, and not the most important. To "do the truth" is to give expression to the highest of which he is capable in every sphere of his being. It relates to action, and conduct and feeling, as well as to word and thought. ([A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles](#))

**The truth** (ten aletheian) - The definitive article identifies this as not just truth in general but in context is "the specific truth" about how a believer should walk. Truth is like a beacon of light which shines on our lies and exposes the darkness of our souls.

**Truth (225)(aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden, that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is.

The basic understanding of **aletheia** is that it is the **manifestation** of a **hidden** reality. For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you

God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and **manifest** something that is **hidden** to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?" Therefore when you speak the **truth**, you are manifesting a "**hidden reality**". Does that make sense? A parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = Mk 5:24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30, 31-32), but when she became "aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth " (Mk 5:33) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods.

**Truth** then is the correspondence between a **reality** and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the **reality**. To say it another way, **words spoken or written** are **true** when they correspond with **objective reality**. Persons and things are **true** when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get".

**Peter Barnes** writes that...

John is saying that because God is holy, his people must be committed to holy living. A person who claims to know God but who walks in darkness is lying and not carrying out the truth. He may believe in Jesus as Lord, he may preach and prophesy in his name, he may perform miracles and cast out demons—but if he practises lawlessness he is damned as one whom Christ never knew (Matt. 7:21–23). If we are not slaves of righteousness, we are slaves of sin (Ro 6:15–18). Without holiness (or sanctification), no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). The evangelist may tell the unholy believer that he is safe, but Christ says that he is not (In Mt 7:21-23). (Barnes, Peter, Knowing Where We Stand: The Message of John's Epistles-Welwyn Commentary Series)

**Paul Apple** summarizes John's teaching (and his warning) in this verse...

Walking in Darkness Invalidates Any Assurance of Fellowship - Remember the false teaching of the Gnostics who believed in dualism = separation of body and spirit; they were teaching that spiritual communion with God is independent of physical morality = your walk says nothing about your relationship with God

**1. Failure to Be Real -- Hypocrisy** (or Self-Deceit) = "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness" This would be walking in a sphere where the light of God is inoperative

## **2. Failure to Be True**

a. In Word = "we lie"

b. In Deed = "and do not practice the truth" - cf practical emphasis of Book of James

If we verbalize that we are sharing in God's life but **our lifestyle** is characterized by the world's attitude of indifference to moral principles, then we are not what we profess to be and are not living according to the Word:

- no conviction of sin is present / no fear of God
- no God-oriented desire to obey and please God
- no orientation of life around Biblical absolutes

If we are living a lie, what type of assurance of salvation should we have? ([1 John Devotional Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** discusses the prototypical human liar, Cain, noting that...

Cain was a child of the devil (1Jn 3:12), which means he was a murderer and a liar (Jn 8:44). He lied to his brother when he enticed him to the place where he killed him. He lied to himself in thinking that he could do such an evil deed and get away with it. Cain even tried to lie to God and cover up his wicked deeds! (Be Basic)

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**Celebrate the Man** - A survey of visitors at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, revealed that many of the park's guests under the age of 15 didn't know that Walt Disney was a real person. They thought that "Disney" was just a company name. When corporate officials planned the celebrations commemorating the 100th anniversary of Walt Disney's birth, they made a special effort to highlight the life and impact of the real man.

With Christmas still a few weeks away, it's not too early to ponder how we can celebrate the Savior's birth in a way that helps others know that Jesus lived on this earth as a real man. What can we do to communicate that a baby born in Bethlehem was the one and only Son of God who gave His life to save us from sin?

The apostle John, a companion of Jesus, taught that to live as a forgiven, transformed person is the best testimony we can give that

Jesus was truly the Son of God, a real person. He wrote, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7). And "He who loves his brother abides in the light" (1Jn 2:10).

More than the gifts we give, it is how we live that will point to the reality of Christ this Christmas. — by David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

### Putting It Into Practice

#### What does it mean to "walk in the light"?

Review these verses for insight: Ephesians 5:8-10;

Colossians 3:12-15; James 3:17; 1 Peter 1:15-16.

### Does your life shed light or cast shadows?

1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [ean de en to photi peripatomen](#) (1PPAS) [os autos estin](#) (3SPAI) [en to photi, koinonian echomen](#) (1PPAI) [met' allelon kai to aimā lesou tou huiou autou katharizei](#) (3SPAI) [hemas apo pases hamartias](#).

**Amplified:** But if we [really] are living and walking in the Light, as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin and guilt [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ([ESVBible.org](#))

**KJV:** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

**NLT:** But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** But if we really are living in the same light in which he eternally exists, then we have true fellowship with each other, and the blood which his Son shed for us keeps us clean from all sin. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** But if within the sphere of the light we are habitually ordering our behavior as He himself is in the light, things in common and thus fellowship we [the believer and God] are having with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son keeps continually cleansing us from every sin.

**Young's Literal:** and if in the light we may walk, as He is in the light -- we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son doth cleanse us from every sin

**BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE HIMSELF IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN:** [ean de en to photi peripatomen](#) (1PPAS) [os autos estin](#) (3SPAI) [en to photi, koinonian echomen](#) (1PPAI) [met' allelon kai to aimā lesou tou huiou autou katharizei](#) (3SPAI) [hemas apo pases hamartias](#):

- **If we:** 1Jn 2:9,10 Ps 56:13 89:15 97:11 Isa 2:5 Jn 12:35 Ro 13:12 Eph 5:8 2Jn 1:4 3Jn 1:4
- **as:** 1Jn 1:5 Ps 104:2 1Ti 6:16 Jas 1:17
- **we have:** 1Jn 1:3 Am 3:3
- **and the:** 1Jn 2:1,2 5:6,8 Zec 13:1 Jn 1:29 1Co 6:11 Eph 1:7 Heb 9:14 1Pe 1:19 Rev 1:5 7:14
- [1 John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Walk in the light: so shalt thou know  
That fellowship of love  
His Spirit only can bestow

Who reigns in light above.

--Bernard Barton

**But** - What a glorious, grace filled term of contrast! Always pause and ponder (meditate) on this great "hinge word" but, as it always marks a change in direction, a 180 degree shift in the text and thus begs the question what is the change of direction? Disciplining yourself to ask this question will allow you to interact with the living Word and the life giving Spirit, your Teacher.

**Walk in the light** - Live your life in the glow of God's Word and God's Spirit, the One who enables you to walk with the Father. As the psalmist says "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a **light** to my path. " (Ps 119:105+) God's Word illuminates the path that leads to everlasting life. God's Word lights our journey thru this spiritually dark world. Indeed there is not a single terrain of life, upon which the Holy Scriptures do not enlighten us by pointing us to the correct principles, according to which we should handle ourselves to live to the honour of God. If God's Word is our spiritual possession, if we "breathe" and live in it, then the living Word becomes to us like the pillar of fire was to Israel as they wandered through the wilderness. It becomes a light upon our path and lamp before our feet, that we have to follow continually until our final day on earth and our arrival in our eternal home with the Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Henry Ward Beecher** -- "The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbour is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars."

**D.L. Moody** - "The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart. In it, we find a light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory."

**Pilgrim's Progress, the First Stage:** "The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, "Whither must I fly?" Then said Evangelist, (pointing with his finger over a very wide field,) "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" Mt 7:13,14. The man said, "No." Then said the other, "**Do you see yonder shining light?**" Ps 119:105; 2 Pe 1:19. He said, "I think I do." Then said Evangelist, **Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto**, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do." So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, Life! life! eternal life! Lu 14:26. So he looked not behind him, Ge 19:17, but fled towards the middle of the plain."

**Plummer** - A further inference from the first principle laid down in v. 5: walking in the light involves not only fellowship with God but fellowship with the brethren. This verse takes the opposite hypothesis to that just considered and expands it. We often find (comp. v. 9) that S. John while seeming to go back or repeat, really progresses and gives us something fresh. It would have enforced v. 6, but it would have told us nothing fresh, to say 'if we walk in the light, and say that we have fellowship with Him, we speak the truth, and do not lie'. And it is interesting to find that the craving to make this verse the exact antithesis of the preceding one has generated another reading, 'we have fellowship with Him', instead of 'with one another'.

**As He Himself is in the light** - Referring to God the Father, with Whom we desire daily walk in fellowship.

**Plummer** - We then must make our spiritual atmosphere similar to His, that our thoughts and conduct may reflect Him.

**Ironside** said...It is where we walk—not how. All real Christians walk in the Light.

**Warren Wiersbe**...If we are the children of God, then we ought to imitate our Father. This is the basis for the three admonitions in this section. God is love (1 John 4:8); therefore, "walk in love" (Eph. 5:1–2). God is light (1 John 1:5); therefore, walk as children of light (Eph. 5:3–14). God is truth (1 John 5:6); therefore, walk in wisdom (Eph. 5:15–17). Of course, each of these "walks" is a part of Paul's exhortation to "walk in purity."

**Toon** writes that in this passage "the basic meaning of **'fellowship'** is a real and practical sharing in eternal life with the Father and the Son. ([Fellowship in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**John Piper** explains what it means practically to **walk in the light**...Walking in the light is the opposite of walking in darkness. It means seeing reality for what it is and being controlled by desires that accord with God's light. If God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, then he is the bright pathway to the fulfillment of all our deepest longings. He is the deliverer from all dark dangers and obstacles to joy. He is the infinitely desirable One. If in His own light He shines forth as a Being of infinite worth, then He is the star of glory that we were made to admire and cherish. If God opens the eyes of our hearts to see all that, then our desires are captured by the surpassing glory of God over every thing that the world has to offer, and we walk in the light as He is in the light. There is a walk, there is a lifestyle, that necessarily results from the miracle of new birth when we are given eyes to see the surpassing worth of the light of God. First John is written to describe what that lifestyle looks like and how it results from the God's

light and our new birth. ([1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God](#))

**Fellowship with one another** - One another refers to other believers but clearly also includes God because genuine fellowship with other believers is not possible unless both parties have first experienced fellowship with God. John is teaching that walking in the light is the condition of fellowship not only with God but also with other believers.

**Plummer**...[fellowship one with another] This certainly refers to the mutual fellowship of Christians among themselves, as is clear from 1Jn 3:23, 4:7, 12; 2 John 5. It does not refer to fellowship between God and man, as S. Augustine and others, desiring to make this verse parallel to v. 6, have interpreted...In that 'thick darkness', which prevailed 'in all the land of Egypt three days, they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days' (Ex. 10:22, 23): i.e. there was an absolute cessation of fellowship. Society could not continue in the dark: but when the light returned, society was restored. So also in the spiritual world: when the light comes, individuals have that communion one with another which in darkness is impossible. In a similar spirit Cicero declares that real friendship is impossible without virtue (De Amic. vi. 20).

**And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all unrighteousness**- The blameless blood covers us with His righteousness (justification) and then daily cleanses us (sanctification). O the wonder of the "cleansing power" of the Lamb's precious blood, which washes us [Whiter than the Snow](#). Here is a beautiful [old Maranatha chorus](#).

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD,  
"Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."  
([Isa 1:18+](#))

[Hallelujah.](#)

Thank You Jesus!

**Plummer**...The 'and' shews that this is a further consequence of walking in the light. "For this is the virtue of the Lord's blood, that such as it has already purified from sin, and thenceforward has set in the light, it renders thenceforward pure, if they continue steadfastly walking in the light" (Tertull. De Mod. XIX.). One who walks in spiritual darkness cannot appropriate that cleansing from sin, which is wrought by the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross as a propitiation for sin. (**His Son**) Not redundant: (1) it is a passing contradiction of Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus was a mere man when His blood was shed, for the Divine element in His nature left Him when He was arrested in the garden; and of the Ebionites, who taught that He was a mere man from His birth to His death; (2) it explains how this blood can have such virtue: it is the blood of One who is the Son of God.

**Cleanses** -

There is power, power, wonder-working power  
In the precious blood of the Lamb.  
His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood availed for me.  
—Charles Wesley

**Plummer**...Note the present tense of what goes on continually; that constant cleansing which even the holiest Christians need (see on John 13:10). One who lives in the light knows his own frailty and is continually availing himself of the purifying power of Christ's sacrificial death. "This passage shews that the gratuitous pardon of sins is given us not once only, but that it is a benefit perpetually residing in the Church, and daily offered to the faithful" (Calvin). Note also the 'all'; there is no limit to its cleansing power: even grievous sinners can be restored to the likeness of God, in whom is no darkness at all. This refutes by anticipation the error of the Novatians, who denied pardon to mortal sins after baptism. Comp. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ ... cleanse your conscience' (Heb. 9:14), and 'These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 7:14).

Light produces life and growth and beauty, but sin is darkness and produces death and corruption (Ro 3:63, Gal 6:8). Clearly, darkness and light cannot exist in the same place. It follows that if we are walking in the light, the darkness has to go. If we are holding to sin, then the light goes. There is no middle ground, no vague "gray" area, where sin is concerned.

**O God of Light**

--Arthur S Booth-Clibborn

O God of light, O God of love,  
Shine on my soul from Heaven above!  
Let sin appear in Thy pure ray

As black as on the judgment day;  
Let perfect love apply the test,  
And all that's wrong make manifest.

**Martin Luther** tells about the dream he once had in which Satan set before him on a great scroll all of his sins and manifold iniquities. Luther didn't argue with the devil, he just admitted each one without denying any of them. In his dream, he simply scrawled 1 John 1:7 across the list: "The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." (**Brian Bill -1 John 1:5-2:2**)

**C H Spurgeon** has this note on 1John 1:7 in his devotional **Daily Help**...

AS he is in the light! Can we ever attain to this? Shall we ever be able to walk as clearly in the light as he is whom we call "Our Father," of whom it is written, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all?" Certainly, this is the model which is set before us, for the Saviour himself said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect;" and although we may feel that we can never rival the perfection of God, yet we are to seek after it, and never be satisfied until we attain to it.

(In His Exposition Spurgeon comments on 1Jn 1:7) So that, in the very highest state to which we can attain in this world, namely, walking in the light, as God is in the light, and having fellowship with him, even then we shall sin, and shall still need the blood of Christ to cleanse us from its stain. So those err exceedingly who say that the Christian man can or does live utterly free from sin. Either they have lowered the standard by which they judge the actions of men, or they excuse themselves on some Antinomian principle, or else they must be altogether ignorant of the truth about the matter; for "if we walk in the light, as God is in the light," and have fellowship with him, still "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and, therefore, there is sin needing to be cleansed, for Christ does no work as a superfluity. But what a mercy it is for us to feel the continual cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus, so that, if we sin through ignorance, or if we sin by omission or by commission, that precious blood constantly keeps us so pure, that we can still walk with God!

Commenting on "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light" (Spurgeon says) Not to the same degree, but in the same manner- So you see that when we walk the best, when we walk in the light, as he is in the light, when our fellowship is of the highest order, yet still we want daily cleansing. It does not say-mark this O my soul-it does not say "The blood of Jesus Christ cleansed " but "cleanseth." If guilt return, his power may be proved again and again, there is no fear that all my daily slips and shortcomings shall be graciously removed by this precious blood. But there are some who think they are perfectly sanctified and have no sin.

**Jim Bomkamp** lists the following indicators or marks of a genuine believer from John's first chapter...

1. Walks in the light - 1Jn 1:6
2. Has fellowship with other Christians who walk in the light - 1Jn 1:7
3. Believes he has a sin nature - 1Jn 1:8
4. Occasionally sins - 1Jn 1:10

([For Pastor Bomkamp's complete list of 34 "marks" see 1John - Marks of a True Christian](#))

## **WALKING IN THE LIGHT NOT OPTIONAL**

**John Piper** clearly sees this section as describing genuine salvation...

Some people think that the only way to make the Gospel really good news is to deny that changes are necessary in our lives. They say that takes away the possibility of assurance of salvation. They say the way we live after putting our faith in Christ has nothing to do with our salvation. I answer that a powerless "Gospel" is not good news. A "Gospel" that only wins lip service is not different than all the other philosophies of the world. Such a "Gospel" produces a Christianity that is a game of words. It encourages lukewarm church-goers that they are safe from God's wrath because of some inherited mental assent to the love of God. Such a "Gospel" accounts for how 40 million people can claim to be born again in America at the same time that our moral condition is an all time low of corruption inside and outside the church.

The message of 1 John—that walking in the light is not optional, but necessary for salvation—is good news because it creates the moral atmosphere of urgency in which serious business is done with God. It gives the flavor of eternity to all we say and do. It militates against religious gamesmanship. It honors the purpose of God in Christ to destroy the works of the devil. It takes seriously the necessity of glorifying God in our bodies. It leads people to real faith instead of encouraging them to be content with a **lip service** that **cannot change** and **cannot save**.

But in the end it simply is not up to us to decide whether the gospel is the kind of good news we would like it to be. Ours is simply to listen and submit to the Word of God. And the Word of God says that "if we walk in the light as he is in the light ... the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." If we walk in darkness, we cut ourselves off from the cleansing effects of Christ's blood. And if we cut ourselves off from Christ's blood, where will hope be found. ([1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God](#)) (Bolding added)

**Let Us Walk in the Light**

**--Fanny Crosby**

There is a Light, a blessed Light,  
That comes from God above;  
And in the face of Christ the Lord,  
Reflects the Father's love.

***Refrain***

*Let us walk in the Light,  
Ever walk in the Light of God;  
Let us walk in the Light,  
Ever walk in the Light of God.*

There is a Light, a glorious Light,  
That falls upon our way;  
And brighter shineth as we go,  
Till lost in perfect day.  
Refrain

There is a Light, a Holy Light,  
By which we now behold  
The jasper walls, the pearly gates  
And streets of shining gold.  
Refrain

O blessed, blessed, Holy Light,  
To all so freely giv'n;  
Shine forth, shine forth, O Light of Life,  
And guide us safe to Heav'n.  
Refrain

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**Forgiven!**

Read: 1 John 1:1-10 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 46–48; Acts 28

I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant. Psalm 119:176

My friend Norm Cook sometimes had a surprise for his family when he arrived home from work. He would walk through the front door, and shout, "You're forgiven!" It wasn't that family members had wronged him and needed his forgiveness. He was reminding them that though they doubtless had sinned throughout the day, they were by God's grace fully forgiven.

The apostle John supplies this note about grace: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin [no inclination to sin], we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7–9).

Monitor your heart daily to avoid wandering from God's wisdom.

To "walk in the light" is a metaphor for following Jesus. Imitating Jesus with the Spirit's help, John insists, is the sign that we have joined with the apostles in the fellowship of faith. We are authentic Christians. But, he continues, let's not be deceived: We will make wrong choices at times. Nevertheless, grace is given in full measure: We can take what forgiveness we need.

Not perfect; just forgiven by Jesus! That's the good word for today.

Lord, I know I'm not even close to being perfect. That's why I need You and Your cleansing in my life. I'm lost without You.

Monitor your heart daily to avoid wandering from God's wisdom.

By David H. Roper

INSIGHT: In this passage we see how confession can restore our connection with God. We are assured that even when we make wrong choices, God will offer grace and forgiveness to the truly repentant. For further study on the subject of God's grace, read Grace: [Accepting God's Gift to You](#) . Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread](#))

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**Walk For Your Health** - Physical exercise may help us fight off colds and infection. The theory is that a good workout puts our body in a condition similar to what happens at the onset of a fever. That's not all bad. A fever is the body's way of fighting back when micro-intruders get into our system. Increased body temperature aids our white blood-cell defense system while slowing down the action of bacteria and viruses. Exercise does the same thing. It releases chemicals into the blood that stimulate the brain to make our temperature rise.

The first two chapters of First John indicate that a regular practice of good spiritual exercise is beneficial to the health of our soul. To ward off sin, we must "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1John 1:7) and obey Jesus each day.

Disobedience, however, cools our spiritual temperature. Fellowship with God and other believers is neglected. Sin is neither confessed nor forsaken. If we have a lukewarm faith (Rev. 3:16-[note](#)), we are not taking advantage of the defense mechanisms necessary to fight spiritual infection.

The right exercise program is one of faith and obedience. It is essential to spiritual health. Walk with Jesus every day, and you'll truly be walking for your health.— by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's Exercise Program

- \* Confess your sins to God (1John 1:9).
- \* Follow His instructions (1John 2:3).
- \* Walk as Christ walked (1John 2:6).

**For a healthy heart,  
give your faith a workout.**

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**Something More to Give** (1John 1:7) - When evangelist John Wesley (1703–1791) was returning home from a service one night, he was robbed. The thief, however, found his victim to have only a little money and some Christian literature.

As the bandit was leaving, Wesley called out, "Stop! I have something more to give you." The surprised robber paused. "My friend," said Wesley, "you may live to regret this sort of life. If you ever do, here's something to remember: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!'" The thief hurried away, and Wesley prayed that his words might bear fruit.

Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger. What a surprise to learn that this visitor, now a believer in Christ and a successful businessman, was the one who had robbed him years before! "I owe it all to you," said the transformed man. "Oh no, my friend," Wesley exclaimed, "not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!"

John Wesley really did have something more to give the thief that night—the good news of salvation. And we have the same responsibility to share the gospel with those who cross our paths.— by Henry G. Bosch (Ibid)

**There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.**  
—[William Cowper \(Biography\)](#)

[Play - There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood — Ponder All Six Stanzas!](#)

[Listen to one of my favorite groups version](#)

**The Gospel is a priceless gift  
to be freely given to others.**

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**Secrets** - "God is light," the apostle reminded us, "and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). But if that is true, how can a holy God have anything to do with the likes of us?

Fyodor Dostoevsky, in *Notes from the Underground*, writes what we all know: "There are certain things in a man's past which he does not divulge to everybody but, perhaps, only to friends. Again, there are certain things he will not divulge even to his friends; he will divulge them perhaps only to himself, and that too as a secret. But, finally there are things which he is afraid to divulge even to himself, and every decent man has quite an accumulation of such things in his mind."

If we have so many deep dark secrets, how can we hope to have fellowship with God? An illustration from Martin Luther's life shows us. Luther had a dream in which he stood before God. Satan was there to accuse Luther, and when the books were opened the accuser pointed to sin after sin in his life. Luther despaired. Then he remembered the cross and, turning to the devil, he quoted 1 John 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Because of Jesus, sinners can be forgiven and stand before a holy God. How do you stand today?— by Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

**Thinking It Over**

"God is light" (1Jn. 1:5). What does that mean?

What creates distance between us and God? (1Jn. 1:6,8,10).

What is the solution to the problem? (1Jn. 1:9).

**No sin is so secret  
that it is beyond God's forgiveness.**

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**There When You Need It** - When I donated blood some time ago, a nurse gave me a card to read while a pint of the vital red fluid was flowing out of my vein. The card showed the percentages of people who have the different blood types. Here are some of them:

O Positive 37.4%

A Positive 35.7%

A Negative 6.3%

B Negative 1.5%

The rarest, AB Negative, is found in only 1 in 167 people, or 0.6% of the population. Then the card made this eye-catching statement: "The rarest blood type is the one that's not there when you need it."

That reminded me of a supply of blood that is one of a kind and always available to those who ask for it. 1John 1:7 states

**The blood of Jesus Christ His Son  
cleanses us from all sin.**

It was the death of Christ, the shedding of His blood, that satisfied the demand of a holy God as payment for our sins (Heb 9:12-note, Heb 9:22-note). So now, whenever a person cries out in faith to God, repenting of his sin and pleading for forgiveness, his prayer for salvation is answered.

I am deeply grateful that Jesus was willing to die on the cross, giving His blood for me, so that forgiveness was available when I needed it. Aren't you?— by David C. Egner (Ibid)

Lord, I believe Your precious blood,  
Which at the mercy seat of God  
Forever does for sinners plead,  
For me, e'en for my soul was shed.  
—[Nikolaus von Zinzendorf \(Biography\)](#)

**Jesus takes our sin  
and gives us His salvation.**

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**Thanksgiving Pardon** - Each year at the end of November, the President of the United States issues an official pardon for the National Thanksgiving Turkey. During this lighthearted ceremony, one president remarked: "Our guest of honor looks a little nervous. Nobody's told him yet that I'm going to give him a pardon." The poor turkey had a good reason to be uneasy—without an acquittal, he was doomed to be Thanksgiving dinner.

We are in a similar situation when it comes to our sin. Without God's pardon, we're on our way to certain demise. This condition is a direct result of our own wrongdoing. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23-note). However, we can be set free from this death sentence because God's Son bore our sin in His body on the cross, "that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1Peter 2:24-note). First John 1:7 tells us that Jesus' blood "cleanses us from all sin."

We can accept God's pardon for our sin and receive eternal life when we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead (Ro 10:9-note). Today, consider how you will respond to God's offer of forgiveness.— by Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Ibid)

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!  
—Chisholm

**Through faith in Christ,  
we receive God's pardon and escape sin's penalty.**

## **MARKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN: THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN**

### **by Jim Bomkamp**

1. Walks in the light - 1Jn 1:6
2. Has fellowship with other Christians who walk in the light - 1Jn 1:7
3. Believes he has a sin nature - 1Jn 1:8
4. Occasionally sins - 1Jn 1:10
5. Continually keeps His commandments - 1Jn 2:3, 3:24
6. Continually keeps His word - 1Jn 2:5
7. Walks in the same way Jesus walked - 1Jn 2:6
8. Does not hate his brother - 1Jn 2:9
9. Loves his brother - 1Jn 2:10, 3:10
10. Does not love the world (cosmos - the world in rebellion against God) - 1Jn 2:15
11. Does not love the things in the world - 1Jn 2:15
12. Does the will of God - 1Jn 2:17
13. Stays in the Body of Christ - 1Jn 2:19
14. Has an anointing and as a result understands the truth of the gospel - 1Jn 2:20-21
15. Believes that Jesus is the Christ (Jewish Messiah of scripture) - 1Jn 2:22, 5:1
16. Abides in Christ (as a branch in the vine: see John 15) - 1Jn 2:27-28
17. Continually practices righteousness - 1Jn 2:29, 3:10

18. Purifies himself just as He is pure - 1Jn 3:3
19. Does not continually practice sin - 1Jn 3:6, 5:18
20. Practices righteousness and is righteous, just as He is righteous - 1Jn 3:7
21. His seed abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God - 1Jn 3:9
22. Loves the brethren - 1Jn 3:14
23. Loves not only with word and tongue, but in deed and in truth - 1Jn 3:18-19
24. The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit gives assurance of salvation - 1Jn 3:24, 4:13
25. Confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (the eternal Son of God/Messiah) - 1Jn 4:2
26. Has overcome the false prophets and teachers (and the spirit that animates them) - 1Jn 4:4
27. Listens to, receives, and believes in the sound teaching from the apostles (the Bible) - 1Jn 4:6
28. Loves (with agape love) - 1Jn 4:7,8
29. Confesses that Jesus is the Son of God - 1Jn 4:15
30. Abides in (agape) love - 1Jn 4:16
31. Loves (agape) because He first loved him - 1Jn 4:19
32. Loves the child born of the Father (either Jesus, other Christians, or all men) - 1Jn 5:1
33. Overcomes the world - 1Jn 5:4
34. Believes that Jesus is the Son of God - 1Jn 5:5