

Holiness, Fellowship, and Forgiveness

Why was this Epistle Written to the Church?

- 1 John 5:13 – Knowledge (γινωσκω and ειδω) --- especially of our assurance of salvation!
- 1 John 2:1a - Righteousness / Holiness / Regenerative Behavior (that we would apply what we know!)
- 1 John 1:3 – Fellowship (that we would experience life with God and other Christians!)
- 1 John 1:4 – Joy (that it would transcend all circumstances and be full!)

The Nature of Christ

- 1 John 1:1-2 – What did the disciple whom Jesus loved want us to know?
 - The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of Life, the God-Man, is a fact!
 - The Incarnation is central to the gospel, our faith, fellowship, and joy!

Holiness (Righteousness or Regenerative Behavior) and Fellowship

What is being contrasted?

Verse	Positive	Negative
1 John 1:5	Light	Darkness
1 John 1:6	Fellowship	Darkness
	Truth	Lie
1 John 1:7	Light	Sin
	Fellowship	
	Forgiveness of Sin	

- What does light (φωζ = phos) represent?
 - Moral purity / holiness; OR
 - Source of radiance or truth that reveals or exposes.
- What does darkness (σκοτια = skotia) represent?
 - Spiritual darkness, moral obscurity or sin.
- John 3:18-21
 - Why should Christians walk in the light? **That deeds may be seen and God may be glorified!**
 - Why do people, including Christians on occasion, walk in darkness? **Fear of exposure!**
- 1 John 1:5-6
 - What happens when a Christian walks in darkness? **Fellowship with God and other Christians, which He and John desire that Christians have (1 John 1:3), is broken (see e.g., Isaiah 59:1-2)!**
- 1 John 1:8; 10
 - What's the implication (Romans 3:23)? **No one is w/o a sinful nature, including Christians!**
 - On the other hand ... what's our promise (1 Cor. 10:13)? **Through Christ we can overcome!**
 - How do we reconcile the apparent paradox? **Christians have potential through the power of the Holy Spirit to choose to not sin; however, we still choose on occasion to walk in darkness (sin). Nevertheless, as a consequence of the sanctification process, Christians should sin to an increasingly lesser degree as time progresses.**
 - False Doctrine Alert : Can a Christian achieve "Perfection"?! **Not in this life (1 Cor. 15:50-54)!**
- 1 John 2:1a
 - Why is John writing these things? **That we would not be in the habit of sin (that it would not be characteristic of our lifestyles).**

Holiness, Fellowship, and Forgiveness

Forgiveness

- 1 John 1:7; 9
 - What should we do if / when we sin? **Confess our sins!**
 - Why? **To receive forgiveness!**
 - How is this possible? **The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (e.g., see Hebrews 9:22)**
 - What's involved in confession?
 1. **Acknowledgement (of the sin, of what is right, of God as holy and just, etc.)**
 2. **Penitence / Remorse (Godly sorrow)**
 3. **Supplication (a petition for forgiveness and mercy)**
 4. **Thanksgiving (for forgiveness, mercy, and grace)**
 5. **Repentance (an earnest desire for)**
- Positional vs Relational Forgiveness
 - Positional / Judicial – **All Christians have by definition been justified by grace through faith (Romans 5:1) and therefore are in a permanent state of positional forgiveness.**
 - Relational – **Though Christians are in a state of positional forgiveness, our sins fracture our relationship with God and with other Christians (our sins damage our fellowship), such that forgiveness is needed for reconciliation and restoration of fellowship.**

The Nature of Christ

- 1 John 1:9 – He is **Faithful, Just**, and the **Forgiver** of sins.
- 1 John 2:1 – He is our **Advocate (defense attorney)**, and He is intrinsically **Righteous**.
- 1 John 2:2 – He is the **Propitiation (the offering to appease One who is offended)** for our sins.

Summary

1 John 1:1-2:2 begins and ends with a focus on Jesus Christ. Therein, the disciple whom Jesus loved focuses on the interdependencies between fellowship and holiness. That is to say: Christian fellowship with God and the body of Christ is founded on the Nature and Person of the eternal God-Man Jesus Christ, and experienced in proportion to the degree that we walk in His light!

Application

Read, meditate, and pray through the following verses:

- Matthew 5:23-24
- Matthew 18:15
- Matthew 18:21-22
- Psalm 51:1-17

Is there someone that you need to contact in order to restore fellowship? Is there someone that needs to forgive you? Is there someone that you need to forgive? Then contact them! Better yet, spend time with them face-to-face!

¹ This is an allusion to the teaching of John Wesley, who erroneously taught that a Christian can achieve a state of “complete sanctification” in this life in which he / she doesn't sin.