

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

I John Lesson 3**I John 1:5-2:2**

return pages 5 & 6 only

Fellowship is nurtured when sin is honestly confronted.

People join together because they share a common interest or goal. For example, a group of friends may get together for a picnic. Athletes make a commitment to a team to play a game that they enjoy. During times of natural disasters, communities band together to fight against fires, floods, and storms.

One of John's primary purposes in this letter was to develop genuine Christian fellowship. Fellowship does not happen just because Christians belong to the same church. Fellowship is a bond in which God draws His children together as they draw closer to Him. To grow in fellowship with one another, we must all grow in fellowship with the Lord.

Sin, however, always threatens to undermine fellowship. Sin is deceptive, and it can attack us in many ways. As John wrote I John 1:5-2:2, he revealed three ways in which Christians can be deceived by false ideas about sin. John ripped the masks off each of these deceptions. He taught the truth about sin and then turned his focus on Christ, Who can cleanse every sin.

Fellowship and sin cannot go hand in hand. To nurture fellowship, we have to confront sin and all of its deceptions. That is essential for the growth of our relationship with God and with each other.

Hanging the Key at the Front Door

In an exciting mystery novel, we have to read right to the end to figure out the plot. The whole story keeps us in suspense until we finally see how everything is resolved.

John, by contrast, did not write a mystery novel. He wanted his readers to know his main point from the very start. After the introductory paragraph, John proceeded to define clearly in verse 5 his major idea. This was the message that he had heard from Christ, and he was going to declare it publicly to his readers. The rest of the letter explains in greater detail what this main point means and how it should be applied.

John's key idea is this: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." In this statement, John set up a clear contrast between what belongs to God's realm and what is outside God's realm. What belongs to God is light, and what is not of God is darkness. This truth parallels what Jesus said as recorded in John 8:12: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life".

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These opposites, light and darkness, represent several related ideas. Light speaks of God's absolute perfection. In 1 John, light pictures God's truth and also His moral purity. On the other hand, darkness indicates error and sin, which contradict God's light.

John challenged his readers to walk in the light and not to walk in the darkness. In other words, he challenged Christians to make God the fixed standard for their lives. He exhorted us to measure our lives against God's truth and purity, rather than following the path of darkness in error and sin.

Throughout this letter, John contrasted what is in the light and what is in the darkness. Instead of saying that everything is relative, just a shade of gray, John made clear distinctions between what is of God and what is against God. He wanted his readers, and us, to know the kinds of beliefs and behaviors that should characterize our lives. At the same time, he revealed the erroneous beliefs and behaviors that can lead to our spiritual collapse.

Walking in the Light

In 1 John 1:6-2:2 John gave three examples of beliefs that belong to the realm of darkness. Each begins with "If we say that . . ." John explained why these statements are not of the light. Then he declared what the truth actually is. These attitudes may have been part of what the false teachers were teaching. At very least, they are the kinds of errors that threaten to move people away from God's light and into spiritual darkness.

In 1:6 John drew a clear line between light and darkness, but some people claim that they can maintain fellowship with God while they are walking in darkness. In other words, they think that God will not mind if we believers have a consistent pattern of sin in our lives. They suppose that Christian liberty is the freedom to do just as we please and that it will not affect our fellowship with the Lord.

John was quick to reject the false claim that sin will not interfere with our fellowship. God is permanently opposed to sin. Sin forms a barrier between God and the sinner. To fellowship with Him, we must be cleansed from sin. To think otherwise is to lie and not to do the truth.

Instead of thinking wrongly that it is possible to sin and still walk with God, we need to focus on walking in the light as God Himself is in the light.

Walking in the light is essential to maintaining fellowship with God. In addition, it is the key to enjoying fellowship with other Christians. Sin destroys fellowship both with God and with others. Godly living keeps us right with God and with other Christians.

This, however, requires more than just human effort. As John explained in 1:8; 2:2, even Christians will commit sins, because they still have the sin nature even after they are saved. We must not underestimate the threat of sin but, rather, recognize that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse us

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from sin. He has provided both for our deliverance from eternal punishment and for our ongoing cleansing from individual sins. What Christ does for us enables us to have fellowship with God and with other people who are also walking in the light.

Carelessness toward sin can have disastrous consequences. Instead of tolerating sin in our lives, we need to treat it as a mortal enemy. Rather than rationalizing that our salvation is secure and that, therefore, sin will not hurt us, we need to remember that sin destroys fellowship. If we are truly committed to God, we must honestly confront sin and forsake it.

Confession Leads to Cleansing

The second false claim about sin comes in verse 8. John referred to those who say that they have no sin, that is, they do not have a sin nature at work in their lives. They regard themselves as being morally perfect and as having no problem with sin.

It would be wonderful if belief in Christ took away the sin nature with which we were born. That, however, is not the case. The Bible teaches that as long as Christians live on this earth, they will have an internal struggle between the spirit and the flesh (e.g., Romans 6:19; 7:14-25; 8:13; 13:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:13, 16, 17). Only in Heaven will we be free from the presence of sin. Until then, it is our constant foe.

Denying that we have a sin nature is no more effective or wise than denying a serious illness. Denial does not take the problem away, and it will likely lead to greater complications. We need to be careful lest we deceive ourselves into underestimating the power of sin to devastate the life of even a Christian. If we do not face the problem of our sin honestly, then God's truth is not in us, and we are in great spiritual danger.

In 1 John 1:9 John told us what we should do about sin. Instead of denying the problem, we need to admit our sins and confess each one of them to God. When we confess our sins, God does two things for us.

In His forgiveness and cleansing, God deals justly with our sins. When Christ died on the cross, He paid the full and final price for sin. As we confess our sins, God accepts Christ's payment for our spiritual debt. God is just in that He does not require of us more than what Christ has already paid on the cross.

People often deny the truth when they are afraid of what will happen if they admit what they have done. We do not have to fear to confess our sins to God. His faithfulness and justice guarantee that when we confess our sins, He will forgive and cleanse us because Christ's death has already paid the full price.

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How God Is Satisfied

The third false claim, in verse 10, is the most serious error of all. John referred to people who insist that they have not sinned. They allege that they have never sinned and that they are, in fact, incapable of sinning.

This claim is a total contradiction of what the Bible teaches repeatedly about human sin. Romans 3 argues powerfully that all people have sinned and that no one is righteous before God. The reason all people need to be saved is that every person, without exception, is a sinner. By claiming to be incapable of sin, they are actually saying that God is a liar. Their claim rejects the truth of God's Word.

John then turned to address his readers warmly as "my little children" (2:1). He told them that he was writing these things so that they would not sin. He did not want them to be deceived and defeated by error.

John, however, was quite realistic. He knew that Christians can and do sin. Although we have been saved by grace, we are still sinners by nature. When we sin, we do not lose our salvation, but our sin is a blot that compromises our fellowship. To be right before God, we must take care of our sin.

Because God is just, His character must condemn all unrighteousness. The Bible speaks of this condemnation as God's wrath, His permanent opposition to all that is evil. Christ, however, died on the cross and paid the full price for sin (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). His substitutionary death fully satisfied the righteous demands of God. This legal satisfaction is what John meant by "propitiation" in I John 2:2. Christ's propitiation extended potentially to every human being because it was sufficient to pay the price for all sins-past, present, and future. This potential benefit becomes actual for each person who accepts Christ by faith.

When we Christians commit sins, we need to confess them to God. Jesus Christ then functions as our advocate before the Father. He pleads our case, pointing to the fact that His death has already fully satisfied God's just demands. God the Father on this basis forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Through Christ we have all that we need for salvation, for cleansing, and for continual fellowship with God.

Notes

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**1 John
Lesson 3**

Name _____

1. What verse identifies the clear point of John's message in these verses?
2. According to these passages, What is the result of following darkness?
3. What are the three examples of wrong belief in these passages?
4. Why is it impossible to fellowship with God and live in sin at the same time?
5. How can we walk in the light?
6. What two very important things should we do according to 1 John 1:9 in order to be delivered from our sin by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?
7. What two natures does a Christian maintain on a constant level?
8. What two things does God do when we confess our sins?
9. As I grow in Christ, I will eventually reach a point of sinless perfection, while on this earth?
10. What is the key verse in this lesson?
11. The sinful practices that I stop doing as a babe, I can do now and they will not hurt me?
12. The devil has no power over me?
13. How do we confront sin?

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True/False

14. Satan intimidates us as a roaring lion, but often he deceives us as a subtle serpent.

15. Sin will cause us to rationalize that we can do wrong and still be in fellowship with God.

16. When we comprehend how Christ paid for sin and how His payment has satisfied God's wrath, we can confidently confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness and cleansing.

17. If we do not recognize that Christ is our advocate, we will want to deny and conceal our sins.



Scripture memorization

Write these out on the back of the page: Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:24;

Where are you living today? Are you walking in the light of God's truth and purity, or are you walking in the darkness of error and sin? Examine your life, confess your sins, and then ask God to forgive and cleanse you so that you can walk with Him in the light.