

## “Hide or Seek?” (1 John 1:5-2:2)

Growing up, most of us played “hide and seek.” Some of us were so sneaky that we could hide and never be discovered. However, hiding is far more than just a game that kids play. Hiding has always been a natural tendency of mankind. We are very good at hiding. We hide what we don’t want others to see. Our tendency to hide dates all the way back to the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit they were ashamed of their sin. So what did they do? They tried to hide from God. It has been this way from the beginning (see Gen 3:1-24; esp. 3:8).

We are still hiding today. We try to hide from God. We all do it. Even as a pastor, I still try to hide from God. I’m not unusual. In fact, I find that churchgoers in particular can be among the most accomplished and sophisticated hiders. Some of us are hiding right now...maybe most of us. And we’re so good at it—it comes so naturally to us that we’re often not even aware that we are hiding. It can come as naturally to us as closing the door on a messy room when a guest arrives. We don’t give it a second thought. It’s what we do. But hiding robs us. Hiding prevents us from experiencing God more fully. Hiding cuts the joy right out of life. We think hiding protects us, but it actually just makes us more vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

So instead of hiding from God, I want to challenge us to seek God. When we seek God and respond to Him, we will experience the fellowship that He has designed for us. John will urge us to *avoid sin, but admit it when we do sin*. In John’s prologue (1:1-4), he set forth the grounds by which we can experience fellowship with God. Now beginning in 1:5, there is a long introductory section that runs through 2:11. Today, we will look at the first section of this introduction (1:5-2:2). Since John’s express concern is that his readers might have fellowship with the apostolic circle and with the Father and the Son (1:3), it is critical to specify what this fellowship is like. In these eight verses, John provides three essentials to fellowship with God. First, we must...

**1. Align our minds with a biblical view of God (1:5).** In 1:5 John writes, “**This is the message we [the apostles] have heard from Him [Jesus Christ] and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.**” This verse serves as an introductory statement that provides a basis for all that follows in the book. The message that John records and proclaims is directly from Jesus Christ. I am now taking the message that John received from Jesus and announcing it to you. So if we don’t like this passage, our problem is not with John or Keith...it is with Jesus!

John begins his message with God. He establishes who God is and then proceeds to what we must do (i.e., ethics and behavior). This is a key principle: Everything begins with a proper understanding of God. John states that “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” He doesn’t say that God is “a light” or even “the light.” John isn’t talking about what God does; he’s talking about *who* God is.<sup>2</sup> He is describing God’s very nature, which is holy.<sup>3</sup> This is indicated by the negative explanation, “and in Him there is no darkness at all.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, God’s light refers to His self-revelation. God sheds light on who He is *and*, as we step into that light, on who *we* are.<sup>5</sup>

One of our problems as Christians is that we want a relative God in whom there is some darkness. We don’t mind a God of light just as long as there is some darkness, because then He won’t get so upset with our little sins. “Just as long as I don’t do the big stuff, He won’t be upset.” But John says there’s no darkness at all! With God, there’s an entirely different standard.

In order to help Lori (my wife) in our home, I clean the bathrooms, particularly when we are hosting guests. Men, I’m sure you can’t relate to this. That’s because most of you have some semblance of handiness. I don’t, so I’m content to clean bathrooms and perform simple household duties and let Lori be a combination of Bob Villa and Mr. Goodwrench.

Well, there have been some occasions when I've cleaned the bathrooms only to be told by Lori that I have done an inadequate job. Talk about crushing any degree of manhood that I had left! At the time, I thought I was doing an absolutely astounding job! The difference between Lori and me is: I clean relatively, she cleans absolutely. My wife cleans with a different standard than I do. She sees some God-forsaken speck behind the toilet bowl that the angels don't even see. She wants to clean that bathroom so our guests could eat off the floor if necessary. I just want to clean them well enough so that they look relatively respectable. So make sure Lori cleans the bathroom before you come to our house!

God is light. James 1:17 says, "In God there is no shifting shadow"—there is no haze. To use our bathroom analogy—there are no spots or stains in God. So if we are going to have fellowship with God, then we must have fellowship with God on His terms. We cannot have fellowship with God on our terms. John doesn't allow for one's personal view of God. People always want to share what they think God is like, but God is not interested in our puny, pea-brained definition of His character. Some go around saying, "I don't think God would do that." Well, how in the world would they know? There's only one way you can know what God is like and what He'll do, and that's by what the Word says.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus has made it clear, here and in other Scriptures—we must know who God is. Once we know who He is, our goal is to pass the baton of truth from one generation to the next (cf. 2 Tim 2:2). Like the apostle John, are we passing the baton of truth to our children and grandchildren? Do they know who God is? Do they understand what God is like? If their spiritual knowledge and application depended upon what we have passed on to them, would that be sufficient? As we reflect on our church family, have we articulated the truth of God's Word to those that we teach and interact with? Are we a church that is grounded in God's Word, both intellectually and practically?

[In order to have fellowship with God, we must align our minds with a biblical view of who He is. Now in 1:6-10 we will learn that fellowship is on God's terms. Our second essential of fellowship with God is that we must...]

**2. Admit our sinful condition and behavior to God (1:6-10).** John continues his argument in 1:6: "**If we [the apostles] say that we have fellowship with Him [God the Father] and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**"<sup>7</sup> John calls a spade, a spade! He does not say, "If we say that we have fellowship with God and yet walk in the darkness, we are mistaken, incorrect or naïve...he says, "we lie<sup>8</sup> and do not practice the truth." In the rest of our passage, John raises three erroneous claims that begin with the phrase, "If we say..." (1:6, 8, 10). He then provides God's remedy (1:7, 9; 2:1-2). The first question that we must ask is: When John says "we," who is he talking about? By looking back into 1:1-4 and even 1:5, it becomes clear that John uses the term "we" to describe the apostles. To be sure, what he has to say also applies to his believing readers and to us, but the apostles are certainly in view.<sup>9</sup> This is important because it means that even an apostle like John can walk in darkness. If John felt that he and his fellow apostles were above such danger, he could have easily said "you" and not "we." So even the most mature, godly, knowledgeable believers can be hiding. No one is immune.<sup>10</sup> This means that we need to be especially humble and transparent and acknowledge our own tendency to walk in the darkness.

What does it mean to "walk in the darkness?" The last clause in 1:6 is enlightening. John says we "do not practice the truth" (lit. "we do not do the truth"). Doing the truth is applying the truth of the word of God to our lives. So, if we're not applying the truth of the word of God to our lives, we're walking in darkness and may be deceiving ourselves. It doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. It doesn't matter how mature you think you are. It doesn't matter how much you think you know. It doesn't matter how much you go to church. If you're not applying the Bible to your life, you may be walking in darkness. This raises a very important question: Are you applying the Bible to *your* life? Are you a doer of the Word and not just a hearer (cf. Jas 1:21)? If you are not proactively reading and applying the Bible to your life, you may be walking in darkness.

Have you ever gotten up in the middle of the night, without turning on a light, and misjudged where the bed ended and stubbed your toe on the end of the bed? That's a nightmare, isn't it? I've done that many times. (The sad thing is I've often done it even with the lights on.) Fortunately, we have lights by our bedroom nightstands that help us see when we get up in the night. Lord willing, if I'm careful, I don't need to continue to stub (or in my case, break) my toes.

So why do we walk in the darkness? Sometimes we hide because we're ashamed of ourselves. Openness and intimacy with God and others is actually a fearful proposition because we think we'll be rejected once our sin comes to light. So, we hide in the dark. We don't want to be exposed (John 3:20). Sometimes we hide because we prefer the darkness. The deeds of darkness can be satisfying for a season (Heb 11:25). We secretly prefer the porn. We prefer to worry. We prefer to get a buzz. We prefer the control. We prefer materialism. So we hide in the dark. Yet, this is not what God desires for us. He doesn't want us to miss out on fellowship with Him; rather He wants us to seek Him with our whole heart.

The test of fellowship is lifestyle not conversation—it is the course of your life. That's what the word "walking" means. It speaks of a progression in life, the direction of your life. A lot of people are long on lip but short on life. They can quote the Bible by the yard, but they live life by the inch. They've got a lot of talking religion but no practice, no changes in their lifestyle occurring, no movement toward God in their walk. When they walk to work on Monday, they walk very different than they walked to church on Sunday. John says, "If we say." We've got a lot of talking Christians—people who can talk spiritual "God talk." But if you want to check out believers, check their feet not their lips!

In 1:7, John responds to his first statement: **"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."** John informs us that the only way we can have fellowship with God is if we "walk in the light." To "walk" is a common biblical expression describing how a person lives.<sup>11</sup> It is not mere Bible reading, prayer, witnessing, and fellowship. Simply put, it is daily obedience and perseverance. Here "walking in the light" means being *honest* with God. It means not trying to hide our sin—either from Him or from ourselves.<sup>12</sup> It is responding to God's Word (see Ps 119:105; 138:23-24). John states that when we walk in the light, we have fellowship with "one another." This phrase does not refer to horizontal fellowship with other Christians. Rather, the "one another" is a reference to vertical fellowship between God and us. The context requires this.<sup>13</sup> We share the light in which God dwells.

The reason we can enjoy such intimate fellowship is because "the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin."<sup>14</sup> The phrase "all sin" refers to man's general sin principle, although it may include the wrong acts which can occur even when a Christian is living in the light.<sup>15</sup> The thought is not of the forgiveness of sin only, but of the removal of sin. The sin is done away; and the purifying action is exerted continuously.<sup>16</sup> God cleanses us at conversion in the sense that He will never bring us into condemnation for our sins (cf. 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 1:7). This is positional forgiveness. However, we need continual cleansing from the defilement that daily living brings because it hinders our fellowship with God (cf. John 13:10). This is progressive cleaning. Even though we have taken the "bath of salvation" (John 13), we walk in this world; we inevitably will get our feet dirty.<sup>17</sup>

Even when we're not doing anything wrong, we're still sinning because our flesh is wicked: In our flesh dwells no good thing. Just getting up in the morning, we sin. When we opened our eyes and got up, we were sinning. When God was the second thing that we thought about, we sinned. Sin is an all-occupying principle. What I want to do I can't do, although I know I ought to do it because sin has taken over me (Rom 7:14-25). We're enveloped in sin because we still have a flesh that has a principle of indwelling sin. It's not that everything we do is sinful; it's that we live in a perpetual state of sinfulness.

So if you're struggling with a sin, praise God, you're in the light. Are there struggles in your life that grieve you to no end and make you sick because you can't seem to conquer them? If so, be encouraged because that's tangible evidence that you're in the light. And one day God will give you a new body that will be free from sin.

In 1:8 John writes, **"If we say that we have no sin [singular], we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us."**<sup>18</sup> Someone has humorously suggested that if a man makes this claim, he does not deceive his wife, his children, or his friend—but only himself.<sup>19</sup> Since John uses the singular word "sin" instead of the plural "sins," it's likely that he's talking about our inherent capacity to sin. So to claim to have no sin is the equivalent of claiming that our inner lives no longer have that propensity to sin. What believer would actually say that he has no sin? It seems like a person would have to be nuts to claim sinless perfection. Most believers that I know would never claim to be sinless. So I guess we can move on because we don't have this problem. Not so fast. Theologically, I suspect we all agree that we sin. That's what you're supposed to say in a Bible church. We pay it lip service as a point of correct doctrine. But sometimes, we don't act like we believe it. Our attitudes betray us. As believers, we can adopt what I call a two-group mentality. We think that there are basically two groups of believers in the church: There's the group with issues. You know, it's the believers who struggle with some big sin issues in their life. They're the black sheep in God's family. Then there's the group with no issues. No big sins issues in that group. They're the spiritually beautiful people. They've got it all together. Those in the group with issues feel like giving up. They feel stigmatized. Those in the group with no issues are feeling pretty good about themselves for not being in the group with issues.

But hear what John is saying in 1:8: There aren't two groups. And if we think there are two groups, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. We're all in one group—the group with sin issues. Every believer struggles with big sin issues. The best moment of the best day for the best believer is still tainted with sin. If we think it's not, we're hiding in darkness, and we may be deceived by the biggest sin issue of all—pride. If anybody could have put himself in a group with no issues, it would have been the apostle Paul. He doesn't. In 1 Tim 1:15, Paul says, "I am the foremost of sinners." Paul doesn't say, "I *was* the foremost of sinners." He says, "I *am* the foremost of sinners." And he is writing nearly 30 years after his conversion. He is saying, "I'm an apostle, and I've got issues."<sup>20</sup>

In my own experience, the closer I walk with the Lord the more conscious I am of my own sin and rebellion. This is true for every follower of Christ. Here's a very important point in all this: The thing that distinguishes hiding in the dark from walking in the light is not the presence or absence of sin in our lives. We all have sin in our lives. The thing that distinguishes hiding in the dark from walking in the light is our openness—our openness to come into God's presence and let Him show us our sin and deal with it through the prayerful application of His Word.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, every time a person speaks at a meeting he or she starts with the statement, "My name is so and so, and I'm a recovering alcoholic." They don't say that to wallow in the past, but to acknowledge the reality that they're never free from the temptation to drink. This is a realistic admission of the fact that no matter how long a person's been sober, they're still just one choice away from relapse. Maybe in the church we should force ourselves to say, "My name is Keith, and I'm a recovering sinner," just to keep this reality before us. C. S. Lewis has said that it's when we notice the moral filth in our lives that God is most present in our lives. Have you been pretending, putting on an image that your battle has ceased? Then it's time for you to respond to God's call to authenticity. You've heard people swear, "Honest to God!" Well, the question for us is: Are we honest to God? Have you come clean with God? Or are we playing a game of spiritual charades? Today, you can come before God and acknowledge your sin. You can be released from the guilt and the hypocrisy. You can experience the grace that He has for you.

Now we come to 1 John 1:9, an often quoted verse: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** One of the questions that people ask when they come to this verse is: “Why do I need to be forgiven again?” The simplest way to explain this is by way of an analogy. My three children became Krells the moment they were born into our family. I am their father, they are my children, and nothing can change that fact of history. If they break one of the Krell Commandments, they remain Krells. But they may not remain in good fellowship with father Krell. Thus, they need to “confess” their sin to reenter fellowship with their father.

We must understand that there is a difference between judicial and relational forgiveness. Jesus instructed His believing disciples to ask the Father for forgiveness (Matt 6:12; Luke 11:14). The fact that God has removed the penalty for our sins at conversion (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 1:7; 4:32; Col 2:13) does not remove the necessity of confessing our sins frequently. Again, the issue is not acceptance by God but fellowship with God. Conversion (forensic, positional) forgiveness makes us acceptable as members of God’s family. Continual (family, practical) forgiveness enables us to experience intimate fellowship as sons within God’s family.<sup>21</sup>

The word “confess” (*homologeō*) means to “say the same thing.” We must call sin as God does. We must agree with God.<sup>22</sup> It’s not enough for me to pray, “Lord, I’m sorry for getting angry at my friend today. But, Lord, You know what he said really bugged me!” I may have mentioned the sin of anger, but I don’t have God’s viewpoint on that sin. Confession is more like saying, “Lord, I’m sorry for getting angry at my friend today. I know the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. My anger was destructive, and I hindered Your Spirit from working in that difficult situation.”<sup>23</sup>

Now, what sins are we confessing? The text says “our sins.” But the word “our” is not in the Greek text. John speaks of “*the* sins.”<sup>24</sup> The word “the” is used to specify something. If I ask my daughter to get me some hot sauce from the refrigerator, she would go there and get me one hot sauce from among many. It really doesn’t matter which one. But if I ask her to get me *Tapatio* on the right-hand shelf in the refrigerator, she knows I want a very specific hot sauce. The importance of this distinction for 1 John 1:9 cannot be overemphasized. It is *the* specific sins I know about which break fellowship between me and God. Thus, when I confess those sins that I am aware of, God forgives those sins and also cleanses me from all unrighteousness. Let’s face it, in the course of a day there are countless sins that I forget to confess. There are also sins I committed that I didn’t know were sins. Yet, if I confess those sins that I am aware of, God’s grace will kick in and take care of the sins I didn’t know about or forgot. This way I can always experience ongoing fellowship with the Lord. He is faithful and righteous. Not only does He freely and fully forgive us, but there is more—He also purifies us.

But let me tell you what a lot of us do. When we get to the end of the day, before bed, we get on our knees and say, “Lord, *if* I have sinned today, please forgive me for my sins.” Guess what, you just ended your day being out of fellowship with God the entire day. If He has shown you a sin of lying at 11:00 and a sin of lust at 1:00 and a sin of anger at 5:00, and you’ve done nothing with those sins and at the time you went to bed you still didn’t do anything with them, you just spent a full day in vain, outside of fellowship with God. It’s a sin to even mutter the words, “If I have sinned.” You’re not saying the same thing that God is saying. We must agree with God and acknowledge what God has said about our sin. When you tell a lie you must agree with God that the sin which the Holy Spirit revealed to you is, and it must be taken care of by the blood of Jesus. And at 1:00 when I lust, I can’t say, “I was just being a man, being human, being natural.” Instead I must say, “God, this was an attack on Your holiness and I plead the blood of Jesus Christ to deal with it right now.” And my anger was not “just because everybody gets mad and has emotions. It was an offense to the character of a holy God and I plead the blood of Jesus.” By the end of the day, you’ll soon be saying, “Thank you, Lord, that every time I sinned you forgave me by Your grace.” This way you end your day in victory and not confusion. Sure, you’ll be praying all day but didn’t Paul say, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17)?

John closes out chapter one with these potent words: **“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”** At first 1:10 looks like it’s saying the same thing as 1:8. The claim in 1:8 is to have no sin (singular), but here the claim is to “have not *sinned*,”<sup>25</sup> which puts emphasis on specific acts of sin that spring from our inner disposition to do things our own way. So if the claim in 1:8 is a claim to be free from an inward disposition to sin, the claim in 1:10 is to not sin. This happens when we fail to confess our sins and call our sins what God does.

Many of our young people like a band by the name of Sanctus Real. Sanctus Real has a song entitled, “I’m Not All Right.” The chorus of the song goes like this: “I’m not alright / I’m broken inside, broken inside / And all I go through / It leads me to you, it leads me to you.” The song then ends with this heartfelt cry: “I’m not alright, I’m not alright, I’m not alright...that’s why I need you.”<sup>26</sup>

[We must align our minds with a biblical view of God. Furthermore, we must admit our sinful condition and behavior to God. Finally, we will see that we must...]

**3. Celebrate our present and future security (2:1-2).** John closes our passage with an empathetic pastoral address in which he calls his readers **“My little children.”** John is not patronizing his readers. He truly does love these children. Furthermore, he is nearly 100 years old so he can call anyone little children. John writes, **“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world”** (2:1-2). John presents a healthy tension here. He is both a perfectionist and a realist.<sup>27</sup> He has written 1:5-10 so that we may not sin. But in the very next breath he says, “And if anyone sins...”

Since we will inevitably sin in word, thought, deed, motive, or action, God has an Advocate in place.<sup>28</sup> His name is “Jesus Christ the righteous.” He is the sinless Son of God who has perfectly fulfilled God’s standards. Why does Jesus have to serve as our Advocate? One reason we need an Advocate is because we have an accuser. Satan is our accuser. Revelation 12:10 informs us that Satan is actually in heaven accusing us before God. Envision it like this: God the Father presides as Judge. Satan brings my case before the Judge. He says, “Look how easily my associates and I have been able to entice Keith to stumble. He’s supposedly Your man but He’s still a wicked sinner. He has denied Your authority. He has sinned once again. He is guilty. So write him off. Punish him. Condemn him. He’s guilty, guilty, guilty. There’s hell to pay! I rest my case.” At that very moment, my defense attorney, Jesus Christ, stands up and says, “Father, Satan is exactly right. Keith has sinned and he does deserve hell; however, I paid the price for his sins when I died on the cross. Keith is my child and he will be with me forever.”

John says that Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins. The word “propitiation” is a million-dollar theological term that means “a payment that restores favor.” One of the roles that Jesus plays is to satisfy the wrath of God toward our sin. Wrath is something that is not talked about much these days. But we must understand God’s wrath in order to understand His grace. God hates sin. He hates sin so much that He put Jesus on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. If His sacrifice was enough to satisfy God’s justice with regard to their sins, it is certainly enough to take care of mine and yours. But John goes even further—he states that Jesus’ death was payment for the sins of all mankind. Holiness is demanded by God, but holiness is also provided by Him.

Theologians usually distinguish between *sufficient* and *efficient*. The death of Christ was *sufficient* penalty to pay for the sins of the entire world, but only *efficient* for those who believe in Him. It’s like being given a gift certificate to Starbucks. The gift has been paid for. That which was paid was sufficient to cover whatever the certificate says. But that certificate has no real meaning in your life until you go to Starbucks and appropriate what was paid for you. Only then will you enjoy the gift. Before going to the store, the gift certificate was *sufficient*, but not *efficient*.

When we built our home in Olympia, WA, we had a Kenmore dishwasher installed. The dishwasher never cleaned our dishes adequately and always seemed to labor as it proceeded through its cycles. So it was no surprise that this year the Kenmore Ultra Wash died. Instead of buying a new one, which would have cost a fortune, we paid a small fortune to have a technician come to our home and repair our Kenmore. Before the technician left, he assured us that our dishwasher was “as good as new.” He told us to run our dishes on a different cycle. He even told us that we could put our plates and silverware in the dishwasher without rinsing them off. I couldn’t believe it! I’ve never done such a thing in my life! I always scrub the dishes and then put them in the dishwasher for sanitizing purposes. I hardly need a dishwasher...I’m the dishwasher! But we followed his simple directions and have had wonderful success. We feel like we have a brand-new dishwasher that finally does what we expect it to do.

Likewise, John tells us that if we want to experience fellowship with God, we must have our sins cleansed. This occurs the moment that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, but it also takes place over the course of our Christian lives. We must also trust that we can take our greasy, grimy sins and have God’s fellowship forgiveness wash over us and cleanse us. It requires faith!

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### **Scripture Reading**

1 John 1:5-2:2

Psalms 32; 51; 66:18

Isaiah 59:2

Romans 7:14-25

Proverbs 28:13-14

Galatians 5:16-17

Hebrews 10:1-22

### **Study Questions**

1. John states that “God is Light” (1:5). Why is it so important to grasp this great truth? How does this reality help me to live my life on Monday morning? How does a theological truth like this keep me from sin?
2. John writes, “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1:5). This refers to the utter holiness of God. How have I been guilty of minimizing the righteous character of God? In what ways do I suppress who God really is? Today, will I commit myself to accept God as He reveals Himself in the Bible?
3. John states that it is possible for believers to “walk in darkness” (1:6). How am I guilty of walking in darkness? How do I feel whenever I live in this manner? What is my fellowship with God like?
4. We all commit acts of sin (1:6-2:1). What temptations to sin am I likely to face this week? Is there a person in my life that I can ask for accountability? If not, will I find a person that I can be transparent and vulnerable with? As a church, how can we become more authentic with one another? Read Psalm 32:4-5; Proverbs 28:13; and James 5:16. What do I learn about confession from these verses? What is the long-term effect of being in a church where the people are not authentic with each other? How can this be remedied?
5. John and the other biblical writers teach that wrath toward sin is one of God’s attributes. Read Joshua 24:19; Psalm 7:11; Ezekiel 8:17-18; Nahum 1:2-3; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 5:6; and Colossians 3:6. Why does God take sin so seriously that He was willing to kill His own Son (see Isa 53:4-6, 10)? How does God feel about the sins that believers commit? Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:14-15 and 18:21-35.
6. John calls Jesus our “Advocate” (2:1). Jesus represents us like a defense attorney and also prays for us. How do the following biblical passages support this role that Jesus fulfills: Luke 22:31-32; Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 2:17; 4:15; and 7:25? How does it make me feel to know that Jesus Christ is up in heaven praying for me? Will I express my debt of obligation to God and praise Him for His work on my behalf?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This introduction has been expanded from Bob Kerrey, “How to Experience God More Fully: *Living Openly in God’s Presence*. A Study of 1 John 1:6-10.”

[http://www.moonvalleybible.org/sermons/2004-11-14\\_1\\_John\\_1\\_6-10\\_Transcript.doc](http://www.moonvalleybible.org/sermons/2004-11-14_1_John_1_6-10_Transcript.doc).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 1:35-36, 46; Rev 21:23.

<sup>3</sup> In Scripture, “light” may refer to God as the source of knowledge, illumination, or guidance. It may point to God’s glory and that He is unapproachable, infinite, unchangeable, and omnipresent.

<sup>4</sup> Sin is called “darkness” in John 1:5; 3:19; 12:35 [twice], and in 1 John 1:5-6; 2:8-9, 11 [twice]). It is also worth noting John’s emphasis in 1:5b: “God is light, and darkness, in Him, no, not any at all!” In the Greek it is a double negative. John could not have made his point more strongly. God and darkness are completely incompatible (see Hab 1:13 and 1 Tim 6:16).

<sup>5</sup> See Daniel B. Wallace, “Honest to God! Or, God is not a Pit Stop” (1 John 1:5-10):

[http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=1187](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=1187). Wallace suggests that it is either holiness or self-revelation. I prefer Hodges who sees both as relevant. Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John: Walking in the Light of God’s Love* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 58.

<sup>6</sup> John is not sharing with us his speculations on what God may be like. He doesn’t throw out an idea and suggest that his readers discuss what they think about it. Rather, John says, “We heard this straight from Jesus and we announce it to you.” It wasn’t a discussion point; it was an authoritative pronouncement from Jesus through the apostles to the readers. To have fellowship with God, we must start with His authoritative revelation in His Word.

<sup>7</sup> John uses the word “if” (*ean*) at the beginning of 1 John 1:6. There are at least two uses of the word “if” (1) assumed reality or you can say “since,” it is assuming something to be true. (2) The other sense is conditional, maybe, maybe not. In this instance, the word “if” indicates that being out of fellowship with God is a distinct possibility. John is saying there can be a big difference between what you profess and what you practice.

<sup>8</sup> John says that when we pretend to be tight with God but hide in the dark, we lie. The Greek verb *pseuometha* (“to lie”) is in the middle voice, indicating that we are lying to ourselves. We’re not just lying to other people; we are actually deceiving ourselves. This is a sobering notion. It suggests that we can begin to believe our own lie. We, as Christians, can actually believe that we’re fine with God while we’re walking in darkness.

<sup>9</sup> See Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*: Anchor Bible series (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1982), 213-232 and Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 59. Unfortunately, many contemporary scholars insist that the “we” is in reference to the claims of the false teachers.

<sup>10</sup> Because this fellowship is something that believers may or may not experience, having fellowship with God cannot be the same thing as receiving eternal life from God. Through faith alone in Christ alone, John and his believing readers had already received eternal life once and for all; they were Christians. So fellowship with God must not have to do with *becoming* a Christian; it must have to do with *living* as a Christian.

<sup>11</sup> See 1 John 2:6; cf. Rom 6:4; 8:4; 1 Cor 7:17; 2 Cor 5:7; 6:16; 10:3; 12:18; Gal 5:16, 25; 6:16; Eph 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Phil 3:17-18; Col 1:10; 2:6; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:1.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace, “Honest to God! Or, God is not a Pit Stop”: [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=1187](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=1187).

<sup>13</sup> Another view is that John meant we cannot enjoy fellowship with God if we neglect fellowship with other Christians. See Glenn W. Barker, “1 John,” *The Expositor’s Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981 [2001]), Electronic Ed. and Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John: The Greek Text with Notes* 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 20. Yet, the context of 1:5-2:2 specifically concerns our fellowship with God.

<sup>14</sup> The “blood of Jesus” is a metonymy for the death of Jesus. A metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing is designated by the mention of something associated with it.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* WBC series (Waco: Word, 1984), 24.

<sup>16</sup> Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Brad McCoy, “Spiritual Stall Recovery: Allowing Jesus to Wash Our Feet” (1 John 1:8-10). Unpublished sermon notes from Tanglewood Bible Fellowship (3/10/96).

<sup>18</sup> The rendering of the NET reflects John’s thought: “If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

<sup>19</sup> Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> Though some would like to say that Paul’s reference to himself points back to a time before he knew Christ, the present tense of the verb will not allow us to go back to Paul’s pre-Christian experience. Wallace writes, “The grammar here will not allow for the ‘historical’ present because the ‘historical’ present is never used with the verb ‘to be.’” See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 529.

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<sup>21</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 John* (<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1john.pdf>, 2006), 11-12.

<sup>22</sup> In the parable of the prodigal son, an earthly father forgives his wayward son. But it required a confession of sin. As soon as the son said, "I have sinned," the father forgave and restored him fully (Luke 15:20-24). Restoration and reconciliation took place when the son agreed with the father. Likewise, if you want to have fellowship with God, then agree with Him about what He says about you.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Benware, "Walking in the Light," *Moody* October 1993: 40.

<sup>24</sup> John does not use the Greek word *humon* ("our"), he uses the word *tas*, which is simply our word for "the."

<sup>25</sup> The verb translated "we sinned" (*hemartekamen*) is in the perfect tense, which typically refers to a past action with abiding results.

<sup>26</sup> Sanctus Real, "I'm Not Alright," from *The Face of Love*.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon, *Living in the Light*, 52.

<sup>28</sup> The Greek word *parakletos* ("Advocate") is used elsewhere to describe the Holy Spirit as our "helper" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).