

A Practical Study of 1 JOHN
“Fellowship With The Father”
Study Number Twelve

1 John 5:13-21

Fellowship is an Indication of Salvation

(Why Geese Fly Farther than Eagles by Bob Stromberg)

On a hot August evening, on the baseball diamond back in my hometown, I was eleven years old, playing right field. I was the worst player on a pretty good team.

All summer I'd been lucky enough to have very few balls hit my way. That's why I was chosen to play out there. Very few balls are hit into right field in Little League.

To my relief, in the last inning of our most important game, once again nothing crucial had flown in my direction. Furthermore, I was home free because I probably wouldn't have to bat again.

“Fine with me!”

Unfortunately, ten minutes later I was walking to the plate with an opportunity to keep us in the game or end our season.

“It's up to you, Bobby,” said my coach, knowing there was no way.

I hadn't really hit the ball all year long. Several times I'd closed my eyes and swung about the time the ball was nearing the plate. Miraculously, the ball intersected the arc of my swing at the proper point, making contact with the bat at the thinnest part. The electrical shock of pain from the violently vibrating

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wood shot open my eyes in time to see the pitcher picking up the ball at his feet and tossing it in a long, slow lob over to first base. Those were my good games.

Now, as I walked toward the plate, I heard the encouraging mumbles of my teammates discussing their hopes for my success. “Oh, well, Harvey, you wanna go to the Tastee Freeze?”

Several of our team parents were packing their younger kids into the station wagons. The fans of our opponents shouted joyfully to their pitcher, “Okay, Bucky! Easy out! Easy out!”

While I stood at the plate, their coach stopped the game momentarily to yell to his outfield, “Move it in, guys! No, no, way in! Come on! Move in!”

The pitcher, a tall, lanky kid with a mustache, hurled the ball at blinding speed right at my head. At the last moment I arched my back, throwing my body into the dust, certain I’d been hit, certain I’d be trotting triumphantly to first base.

The umpire watched the ball curve straight down the middle and shouted, “STEEEEEE-RIIIIIIIKE!!!” The fans went crazy.

The last two pitches were slow balls. At least I think they were. They seemed to take about five minutes to get from the mound to the plate. I could see the stitching on the slowly rotating ball. I could hear my coach screaming “Take a cut, Bobby. Now!”

I wanted to swing, but I didn’t. I wanted to risk it all, stand there with a smile on my lips, point to the outfield and say, “See that spot, Bucky? It’s goin’ right there.”

But I didn’t. I stood there, a pasty color, afraid to

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take a swing as the ball floated by.

My reasoning was “If I swing the bat, I might miss the ball.”

Now, at the annual science fair, I saw two jittery little girls by their Loch Ness display; two abrasive little round guys who seemed to understand little about friction; and a shy boy who might have been able to tell me a whole lot about parallel circuitry if his dad would have just stopped talking.

Now I understood. The kids didn't want to go to the plate and take their stance in front of the teachers, their parents or me. None of them dared to risk it all and say, “Let me tell you what I learned, ‘cause I learned a bunch.”

Instead they struck out without taking a cut at the ball. Their reasoning was “If I try to tell them what I know, I might be wrong.”

The fear of failure stole all the joy of learning.

I returned home that evening with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was depressed, and I felt bad for those children who had worked so hard and enjoyed it so little.

On the other, I felt pretty good about Lars. He actually understood how plants breathed and was anxious to tell the little bit he knew to anybody he could find. I'm glad he's that kind of child.

Several days later he was thrilled to show me a dead plant 2. I'm not sure if it had suffocated the way it was supposed to or if the two pounds of Vaseline had broken its will to live.

I won't forget the evening. It encouraged me, a middle-aged, comfortable guy, to take a few risks. It

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encouraged me to be a father who helps his children keep the world in perspective. It made me grateful to realize it doesn't matter whether I go down swinging or freeze at the plate; God doesn't throw me off the team. All in all, I think I learned more at my son's fair than I did at my own.

pp. 74-76

(Baby Boomer Blues by Dr. Gary R. Collins & Dr. Timothy E. Clinton)

According to Seligman, past generations were able to maintain hope through difficult times because they had three anchors of stability in all of their societies: faith in God, pride in one's country, and stability in the family. All three of these anchors seem to have disintegrated during the baby boom decades.

p. 51

We often sing with intense enthusiasm Fanny Crosby's great old hymn: "Blessed Assurance" but you sometimes wonder, do people really believe that?

**Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O, What a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.**

**Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.**

The questions we raise at this point in the letter because we are at the end of the letter is that John is wondering:

Do we have this wonderful assurance of knowing that Jesus Christ is living in our lives?

Do we know that our eternal destiny is cared for?

Do you know with a certainty beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are heaven bound if something traumatic took place in your life at this moment?

We have been studying 1 John for the past 11 studies. The overall theme has been:

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER

and today as we come to this 12th study

“Fellowship is an Indication of Salvation.”

In these studies, we talked about:

Fellowship Is Restored by Jesus Christ

Fellowship Is Broken by Sin

Fellowship Is Nourished by Obedience

Fellowship Is Escalated by Growth

Fellowship Is being Educated by His Spirit

Fellowship Is a Rehearsal for the Future

Fellowship Is Apparent by Fruit

Fellowship Is Sacrificial Servanthood

Fellowship Is Preserved by Discernment

Fellowship Is Generating “Agape” Love

Fellowship Is Activated by a New Birth

And now we come to our final Study # 12 together:

Fellowship is an Indication of Salvation

v. 13 I wrote these things to you in order that you may know that you are having eternal life, you who are believing in the name of the Son of God.

This is the KEY VERSE to this final study right here at the beginning.

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Why is he writing, why has he written the whole epistle? **“I WROTE THESE THINGS TO YOU”** with a purpose in mind, my purpose is **“IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU ARE HAVING ETERNAL LIFE.”** And then he says what is the basis for eternal life, **“YOU WHO ARE BELIEVING IN THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.”**

FAITH again is the single condition, the key thought for salvation. Have I placed my faith and trust in **Jesus Christ?**

Many times the reason people do not have assurance is they do not believe that. They believe that salvation is based on faith plus a joint venture from us cooperating with some kind of good plan and that can explain why people sometimes do not know.

It is a shock to people for someone to give such a positive testimony that they are on their way to heaven without a doubt, that they have a certainty of things which are spiritual. What do you think the answer is? Well we know that the answer is **YES**, you can know beyond a shadow of a doubt the answer is yes, I can have certainty in these things which are spiritual because I believe God's Word. And yet many struggle with this whole issue.

Now we that have fellowship with the Father, the more we fellowship with Him the more He clears away the doubts and the more we become aware of His precious

presence.

So John tells you in just one sentence, this is why I wrote the whole book. I wrote it to you so you would know that you are having eternal life.

Now is the whole teaching of assurance actually Biblical? Are there those who would make a dogmatic declaration that yes, this is true?

Well, John 8:56 let's look at ABRAHAM for a second.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.

Yes, there is no question about it for Abraham.

How about JOB?

Job 19:25, 26

**I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;**

Do you see any doubt in that guy's statement?

How about DAVID in:

Psalms 23:4

**Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.**

**Even in the hour of death David can say I fear no evil.
Can you say that? You have great confidence.**

How about the apostle PAUL?

Romans 8:38, 39

**For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor
angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor
things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor any other created thing, shall be able to
separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ
Jesus our Lord.**

PETER says the same thing:

2 Peter 1:10

**Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to
make certain about His calling and choosing you;
for as long as you practice these things, you will
never stumble.**

And then JOHN himself in:

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1 John 3:14

As for us we are knowing that we have passed over out of death into life.

You know I read a commentator one time when it was on the apostle Paul where Paul says “oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory?” The commentator said “you know that is just a young man talking. Let’s see what happens when he gets ready to die.” So I went to find where he died.

2 Timothy 4:6

I am ready to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also who love His appearance.

Do you have that assurance today? Confidence that comes out of spending time in fellowship with the Lord.

Now the word ASSURANCE means:

“a positive declaration intended to give confidence,”

it is “freedom from doubt,”

it is “a certainty.”

It is the very fact that we have fellowship with the Father, and that we long and seek this fellowship with Him, that is a healthy indication of our salvation and the basis for our assurance.

Can I put it this way?

FAITH is the ROOT, and ASSURANCE is the FLOWER.

Out of the faith in the stable, sound structure of the Scriptures comes a flower of assurance that blossoms in my life.

Faith is that poor, trembling woman coming behind Jesus in the press of the crowd and touching the hem of His garment.

Assurance is Stephen standing with the stones pelting down upon him and he sees the heavens opened and he sees the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

Faith is the penitent thief crying, “Lord, remember me!”

Assurance is Job sitting in the dust, covered with sores and saying, “I know that my redeemer lives. Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

Faith is Peter’s drowning cry “Lord, save me!”

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Assurance is the same Peter declaring before the council, “This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.”

Faith is the anxious, trembling voice, “Lord, I believe Help Thou my unbelief.”

Assurance is the confident challenge of the apostle, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Even with all these wonderful declarations of scripture, there can still be that inner fear of coming to that moment and being rejected and have to face eternity without Jesus Christ.

The obvious question that flows from this is:

**If we can know, why don’t more people know
that they are really born again,
and have eternal life?**

Could the 1st REASON be:

1. MAYBE THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN BORN AGAIN,

I mean there is so much that goes on in religious circles that substitute for the born again experience. And if a person has never been born again he cannot have assurance. He can:

be a church member,

be a baptized church member,

be catechized,

attend Sunday school,

have a perfect attendance pin,

have parents who are Christians,

but they have never personally come to know Jesus Christ by themselves. Then you have to say it is legitimate that they do not have assurance.

Now the 2nd POSSIBILITY is:

2. PERHAPS THEY ARE DEPENDING UPON GOOD WORKS.

They are really trying to keep the law.

**“Many will say to me in that day,
‘Lord, Lord, haven’t we done many wonderful works,
“living by the ten commandments,
living by the golden rule?”**

Now there is ANOTHER POSSIBILITY and this is a very real and probably and little more practical possibility.

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**3. Perhaps some people are reversing God's order of
FACT,
FAITH,
and FEELING.**

They will say something "you know there are times when I feel like a Christian and there are other times when I don't." "There are times when I feel close and there are times when I feel far away." "There are times when I have warm fuzzies and there are times when it is just really tough to hang in there." And so they say on that basis I certainly cannot be a Christian. Let me put it this way:

God said it, I believed it, and that settled it.

It is like a train. Put the engine with the facts, put the cars in your faith and put the caboose on the end. And the feelings have nothing to do with it.

God said it, I believed it and that settled it.

Now sure you are normal and when you become a Christian and your sins are washed away you are going to blubber a little maybe and maybe tears are going to come flowing from your eyes when you are overwhelmed in gratitude by the power of the Spirit and feelings are not bad, that is okay. But do not let them pull the train. It is people who do that who lose

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their assurance because their feelings go up and down like this and there is not any stability.

There is only one man in Scripture who ever relied on his feelings and the record is clear. ISAAC felt the arms of Jacob that had been covered with goats hair and he gave the blessing to who he thought was the wrong man but was really God's choice.

And so feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. Not anything else is worth believing but the Word of God. Stand on the statement of Scripture.

You want to see that in a passage played out?

Acts 8:30-39 is a great illustration of it. What happens when PHILIP meets the ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH down on the Gaza Strip? The guy is reading from Isaiah 53 if you can believe it. What a set up. Here he is reading the Scripture and he invites Philip to come up and explain the Scriptures to him. And he starts there in Isaiah 53 and he preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this Ethiopian Eunuch and the Ethiopian Eunuch now wants to be baptized. So what does Philip say? "If you believe, if you can put your faith in these facts and declare the person of Jesus Christ, you can be saved." And he did. And they went down in the water and experienced the ordinance of baptism and he came up out of the water and the Lord caught away Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." There's your feelings.

You have FACT

You have FAITH

You have FEELING

Keep them in that order and it will help you.

Now ANOTHER POSSIBILITY is:

4. A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND A LACK OF FAITH.

1. Not really knowing what God has planned for the future. It is Biblical ignorance by having not studied the promises about eternal life and the doctrines of salvation and understanding it.

2. And then A LACK OF FAITH.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Now I know what you are saying. You are saying:

Okay, then how can I know?

I knew you were going to ask it.

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There are 4 WAYS that you can know right now. These things are definitely reliable.

- 1. YOUR OWN PERSONAL TESTIMONY. Nobody can take that away from you, your own personal testimony that once you were blind but now you see, once you walked in darkness but now you walk in light. You know that.**
- 2. THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD. You took Him at His Word.**

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them gave he the right or the authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

And then the third, indisputable evidence is:

- 3. YOUR LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS. Boy I just love to be around young believers they are so pure in their love. It just excites you.**
- 4. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO DWELLS WITHIN YOU. Many times I ask people who have a lack of assurance "have you ever felt this way about the sin in your life?" And they will say "no" and I will say "well that is an obvious evidence that the Holy Spirit is convicting you about that thing so renounce it, do away, the indwelling resident is offended by**

what is going on in your life, that is why you feel so miserable about what you are doing.”

As I continue to desire fellowship with the Father, this is a very prominent indication of having experienced salvation.

And the more intimate you become with your heavenly Father, the more confidence and trust you are going to have that these promises which He has made are true.

Now in this section is it interesting, you have the little word “KNOW” 7 times so it is easy to understand what he is talking about with regard to assurance.

- 1. WE ARE KNOWING THAT WE ARE HAVING ETERNAL LIFE.**
- 2. WE ARE KNOWING THAT HE IS HEARING US**
- 3. WE ARE KNOWING THAT WE ARE HAVING THE REQUESTS THAT WE HAVE MADE.**
- 4. WE ARE KNOWING THAT EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD IS NOT SINNING.**
- 5. WE ARE KNOWING THAT WE ARE OUT OF GOD.**
- 6. WE ARE KNOWING THAT THE SON OF GOD HAS COME.**

7. WE ARE KNOWING THE TRUTH.

v. 14 And this is the boldness (confidence) which we are having toward Him, that if we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.

Now as a result of coming into this relationship we know we are coming to someone who is in partnership with us and as we come with this kind of prayer desiring His will, He responds. We have a freedom of speech coming into His presence and on the basis of our fellowship with the Father the lines have communication have been established and the requests that I am making of Him will be His will. He has burdened my heart because of my fellowship with Him and I start praying about it. The things which I am praying about are His will to fulfill and we know joy in doing that.

Boyd Luter said:

Many of us have bought an understanding of prayer as some kind of 800 number to God for the purpose of ordering whatever we want, free of charge.

With this prevailing mentality, it's no wonder that some pragmatic people tend to give up on prayer when they don't see immediate dividends from their time investment.

However, when you're dialing 911 in the middle of a crisis situation, you don't want to be put on hold or told to find help elsewhere. So, I'm sure Paul was hardly

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elated when he cried out in pain repeatedly to the Lord and the answer kept coming back, “I’m not going to take the thorn away, Paul. It will teach you invaluable lessons about My power and grace.” But God did answer Paul by telling him that the thorn was tolerable because he could spell spiritual “relief” in the midst of painful circumstances G-R-A-C-E.

To walk you through it.

Yes, prayer is vital. It is an effective tool in the communication with the Father and a part of our fellowship.

v. 15 And if we are knowing that He is hearing us, whatever we are asking, we are knowing that we are having the requests which we have asked from Him.

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

He is there, He is available and He is ready. Are you talking to Him?

Now we come to the final big challenge in the book.

v. 16 If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not towards death, he shall ask and He shall give him life--those who are not sinning towards death.

There is a sin towards death, not concerning that am I saying that he should make request.

Now there is a “SIN” which leads to “DEATH.” This is not talking about unbelievers. There is a sin unto death for believers. Stay in your context and where it is.

Now by the fact that there is a sin unto death there is also a sin that is not unto death here in the passage. Let me just put it this way. Most of the sins that you are going to encounter in the lives of your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ are going to be those that lead not to death. It is going to be an accident. It is going to be something that has been done in a moment of weakness by the power or the pressure of the evil one or the flesh within me or the world around me trying to conform me to its mold and in the moment of weakness I say yes when I should have said no. I have sinned. What do I do? I go right back to 1 John chapter 1 and I realize I have an advocate and I deal with the accident in repentance and brokenness, I forsake the thing, I make it right, I seek His forgiveness and I put it behind me. And with the apostle Paul “I forget those things which are behind and I press on toward those things which are in front.” Now that is a sin not unto death for the believer.

What is the sin unto death? Well ANANIAS and SAPPHIRA are probably the greatest illustration of it in Acts 5. They lied to the Spirit of God and suffered with the loss of their physical lives.

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When it comes to the matter of sin unto death I have to say that it is a believer that just will not listen and just will not learn. If we really were technically correct, we could say there are 2 MANIFESTATIONS of sin unto death.

- 1. The first is a person who is not a Christian. His sin is going to lead to physical and spiritual death because he has never come to Christ.**
- 2. But what we are talking about here in this passage is a problem for a believer who is committing a sin unto death. And this sin unto death can be an occurrence whereby someone is just completely unwilling to renounce or to forsake or to deal with the matter in the life and the time comes when God blows the whistle, pulls on the chain and says you are going to be more credit to me here in the house than you are down there on earth, come on home.**

We are not ones who can ever accuse another believer of that kind of thing, certainly not. But we must recognize the fact that it is very real.

And I must always as a believer be dealing with sin in my life in a proper Biblical way or I put myself into the process of recovery. I call it the stages of recovery.

- 1. Whenever I sin God provides an opportunity for confession and to deal with it immediately. That is phase number one. The circumstances of grief in**

my heart and things around me that are not right are the first phase. He lovingly provides plenty of time for me to respond as his child.

2. Now if I do not respond, we go to phase two and that is chastening. This is God disciplining His child with His heavy hand, seeking to get some kind of a response to the sin problem. God is just not going to let a child of His continue to sin.
3. And then finally He is just going to say okay that is it. And that is the sin unto death. The sin unto death is the physical death of the believer who is making excuses, who is stubborn and bull headed and will fail to respond to the clear teaching of Scripture in these matters. My responsibility with regard to the problem of sin in my life has already been taught to me back in chapter 1:9, I am to confess, I am to be a person who seeks the cleansing and forgiveness.

Now the life that is being talked about here, you giving him life, is reminding the guilty one of what sin does to our Savior Jesus Christ and also our responsibility for maintaining fellowship with the Father by confession of sin. That is giving him life. That is reminding him of what his sin is doing, it is hurting the Lord and also reminding him that the way back to abundant life is to deal with his problem in an open, transparent and honest way.

Now when that is done you have “A SIN NOT

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TOWARDS DEATH.”

Most of the Biblical commentators that I read follow along that similar track.

“THERE IS A SIN TOWARDS DEATH, NOT CONCERNING THAT AM I SAYING THAT HE SHOULD MAKE REQUEST.”

This sin unto death then is the final phase of the believer.

Can I give you an illustration?

1 Corinthians 11:30

This is why before you come in here for the communion table you better be sure you have dealt with things in your life before you come to celebrate the ordinance of the Lord's Table. This is the warning.

For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

Let a man examine himself and so let him eat. You do not come to the table with dirty hands and dirty heart. You come to the table with sin cared for and taken care of lest you throw yourself into the position of being disciplined by the Lord.

You see as long as the Christian hates sin and he hates himself for sinning, he is never beyond repentance and

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forgiveness. I believe sin unto death is the state of a man who has listened to sin so often and refused to listen to God that he has come to a state where he loves his sin more than he loves God and he rationalizes his behavior and he goes right on.

You see you can play along like that and deal with those things and God is watching. All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And He knows our hearts.

Somebody said secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. I think that was Lewis Sperry Chafer. There is no scandal in heaven but it does describe the fact that it is all well known and how careful we must be in the way we handle sin in our life.

You know when I got to this place in the study I just flat had a new deep appreciation for what sin does to my Savior and what my own blasé attitude toward some of these things are and what it does to Him. And how I must be a person who is sensitive to this and be dealing with it.

v. 17 Every unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not towards death.

And we have already talked about that and it entangles our feet as we run the race and it is an accident.

v. 18 We are knowing that everyone who has been born of God is not continually sinning. But He who

was born of God is keeping him, and the evil one is not laying hold of him.

You are saying “oh man I am so glad it says ‘NOT CONTINUALLY SINNING.’” That is true, that is the present tense in the Greek. And it is a person who has accidents but deals with the accidents and is not continually sinning because a person “WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD” is not sinning. You have a new nature within you that does not have the capacity to sin, that SEED which remains within you. But it is my old nature that responds to the world, the flesh and the devil that is continually sinning.

“BUT HE WHO WAS BORN OF GOD (*that is my new nature*) IS KEEPING HIM, AND THE EVIL ONE IS NOT LAYING HOLD OF HIM.”

You could translate this phrase “he who was born of God is keeping himself” and that is true. You are keeping yourself in fellowship with Him while you are dealing with these things in your life. There is a cleansing that is taking place.

“AND THE EVIL ONE IS NOT LAYING HOLD OF HIM.”

This phrase can be translated in a number of ways. Let me give you just a little background of the Greek word.

You could say:

“AND THE EVIL ONE IS NOT KINDLING A FIRE.”

Ha, ha we understand that.

“AND THE EVIL ONE IS NOT CLINGING TO HIM.”

“THE EVIL ONE CANNOT HARM HIM.”

“THE EVIL ONE CANNOT EVEN TOUCH HIM.”

All of those variant meanings can come out of this Greek word that I have translated here **“LAYING HOLD OF HIM.”**

Now lest you get intimidated by Satan, realize again that He is a defeated foe and that John 17:15 when Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed:

John 17:15

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

That tells me that my throwing myself into the path of the evil one is my choice and my responsibility. It is God's desire to keep us from him, to protect us from him and his desires in our lives.

v. 19 We are knowing that we are out of God, and the whole world is lying in the power of the evil one.

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We belong to another kingdom. We belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan is the god of this world.

v. 20 Now we are knowing *[there it is again]* that the Son of God has come, and has given to us insight, in order that we may be knowing the truth, and we are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Isn't that a grand and glorious affirmation of the deity of Christ and the relationship which we have with Him? He has given us INSIGHT so that we may know the truth. He helped us and guides us in the truth.

But you know the tragic counterpart of that and it is:

Ephesians 4:18, 19

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, and every form of greediness.

We know the truth in Jesus Christ and this is the true God and eternal life.

Have you ever wondered why John ends the letter with a command that seems so foreign to context? What does he say?

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v. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

You see you cannot have fellowship with God and have something else more important in your life than that relationship with Him. It fits the passage perfectly. You know yourself that if your soul mate, the one to whom you are married, had somebody else in their lives how horrible that would make you feel. How do you think God feels when He sees us putting substitute loves for Him? What do you think it does to fellowship? What do you think it does in a situation like that?

James 4 says:

You adulteresses, don't you know the love of this world is enmity toward God? It is repulsive to Him.

You say "well I do not have any little idol that is sitting in the corner that I worship." Oh don't you? We just need to define the 20th century IDOL as:

a home,

school,

internet,

television,

athletic events,

anything in my life that comes before God is an

idol.

Idolatry is a serious matter and you cannot have fellowship and you cannot have communication with Him when there is something else in your life.

In John chapter 2 Jesus comes to the temple and He sees them selling animals for sacrifice. And does He just kind of wimpily walk around and accept it and condone it? I mean you talk about a man who meant business. He braided a rope and made a whip and cleansed the place.

“FELLOWSHIP IS AN INDICATION OF SALVATION”

How about your fellowship?

Do you know Christ personally?

Do you live in your life, as a result of a relationship, the experience of joy and fellowship with your Father?

Are there any idols that are keeping you from fellowship?

Is there a misplaced love and communion?

Is there a misplaced love and communion? Is there a faulty love and belief?

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Bill Bright wrote a book a number of years ago called *Revolution Now* and in it he gives this little story:

Some years ago I became aware of a young coed who is now my wife. I thought she was the most wonderful young woman in the world. And as I became better acquainted with her, I fell in love with her and she with me. But we were not married just because we admired each other or because we loved each other. It was not until one day we stood before a minister and exchanged vows, I said to her, "I do, until death do us part;" and she said to me, "I do, until death do us part." And in that moment, because of the two words, "I do" we became husband and wife. Two words "I do" changed the course of our lives. She left her home and I left mine and we started a third home. Now there was no display of emotion when I said, "I do." The walls didn't shake and the lightning didn't flash. There was no roar of thunder. I did not feel like jumping up and clicking my heels. As a matter of fact, I felt a little numb. But we were married nonetheless. Those two words did it. She marched down the aisle on my arm, Mrs. William R. Bright. You know, I have not proposed to her since. I have told her that I love her thousands of times, but one wedding ceremony is sufficient. My love for her has grown through the years since that moment when we said I do. So it is with Christ, if you have never said to Christ, "I do receive you as my Saviour," or if you have asked Christ into your life scores or even hundreds of times, may I encourage you to do so right now. Ask Christ for the final, the very last time to come into your life and then on the

authority of his promise thank him that he has come. He will not lie to you. Millions have received him. Their lives have been changed as a result. After you have received him, never ask him into your life again. The rest of your life you thank him that he is there, for his promise is to never leave you nor forsake you.

I see a pierced hand reaching down and resting upon you. I hear a gentle voice pleading. It seems as though the Spirit of God is bent on making one last effort to impress His will upon you, and it is a will that means only your good.

What happens when fellowship kind of reaches its fruition? I conclude this series of studies with a little story about A.J. Gordon:

Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston often told the little incident of what he called “the greatest compliment I ever received.” Standing in one of the Boston streets gazing through a store window, he became conscious of a tug upon his trouser leg. Turning, he looked down upon a bright little girl gazing at him with a look almost of worship.

His heart went out to her as he stooped down. “Yes, my dear, what can I do for you?” he asked.

She paused for a long moment looking at him. When she spoke, it was in the form of a question. And what a question! The little girl, gazing into his soft, warm eyes, wished to know, “Mister, are you Jesus?”

I don't know how this story strikes you. To be mistaken for the Lord Jesus is surely the greatest compliment a Christian could receive. It marks out our true business here on earth--to manifest and magnify Him. I was convicted of my own failure in the light of this clear, underlying truth. Over and over I asked the question, "How does a Christian get to look like the Lord Jesus?"

I made it a matter of prayer asking the Lord to reveal the secret of it from a totally unexpected source!

I had been invited to attend a golden wedding anniversary party. It was a gala evening. The children and relatives and friends gathered with joy to "wish them well." I remember so well standing to one side with a friend watching the charming, graceful couple who had traveled the road of life together in such fine fashion. Then my friend made a chance remark. For me the remark fell as a directed message from the Lord.

"Look at them," he said softly. "Why, they have been living together for so long that they have gotten to look like each other."

That was it--the secret, the answer. They were living together in every blessed sense, loving each other deeply sharing to the fullest measure, veiling nothing. It was little wonder that they had grown to resemble each other.

Is that not the best way in which we may live so as to magnify and manifest the Lord Jesus Christ? We must walk in sweet communion with Him. We must seek nothing apart from His will. We must have all things moved, melted and molded to the sensitive pattern of Jesus only. This is the whole sweet secret.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Fellowship with the Father is an indication of salvation.

LESSON #2: You can know that you are having eternal life.

LESSON #3: We can have boldness in prayer when we are asking according to His will.

LESSON #4: Sin which is not unto death is an accident on the part of the believer and a fruitage of his old nature.

LESSON #5: Sin must be dealt with in the heart of the believer by confession and repentance so that fellowship can be restored.

LESSON #6: Sin unto death is physical death for the believer who persists along the pathway of sin.

LESSON #7: The new divine nature within the believer is indeed sinless.

LESSON #8: Satan's only entrance to us is through us our old nature.

LESSON #9: The whole world is the evil one's domain.

LESSON #10: The Son of God has come, and He has opened our eyes and given us insight so that we can choose to walk in the light.

LESSON #11: We are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ.

LESSON #12: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."

STUDY NUMBER TWELVE

FELLOWSHIP IS AN INDICATION OF SALVATION 1 JOHN 5:13-21

KEY VERSE 5:13

v. 13 I wrote these things to you in order that you may know that you are having eternal life, you who are believing in the name of the Son of God.

v. 14 And this is the boldness (confidence) which we are having toward Him, that if we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.

v. 15 And if we are knowing that He is hearing us, whatever we are asking, we are knowing that we are having the requests which we have asked from Him.

v. 16 If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not towards death, he shall ask and He shall give him life—those who are not sinning towards death. There is a sin towards death, not concerning that am I saying that he should make request.

v. 17 Every unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not towards death.

NOTES

v. 18 We are knowing that everyone who has been born of God is not continually sinning. But he who was born of God is keeping him (himself), and the evil one is not laying hold of him.

v. 19 We are knowing that we are out of God, and the whole world is lying in the power of the evil one.

v. 20 Now we are knowing that the Son of God has come, and has given to us insight, in order that we may be knowing the truth, and we are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

v. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 John 5:13-21 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What has John's purpose been in writing this letter, according to verse 13?

3. What is our "confidence," according to verse 14?

4. What do you think John means by "a sin not towards death" and "a sin towards death" in verse 16?

5. How is the one "born of God" described in verse 18?

6. What is the position of the world, according to verse 19?

7. Why has Jesus come, according to verse 19?

8. What is John's final command in verse 21? Can you think of any idols in your life?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Fellowship with the Father is an indication of salvation.

LESSON #2: You can know that you are having eternal life.

LESSON #3: We can have boldness in prayer when we are asking according to His will.

LESSON #4: Sin which is not unto death is an accident on the part of the believer and a fruitage of his old nature.

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