



## FELLOWSHIP IN JESUS CHRIST - 1 JOHN 2

### INTRODUCTION

In chapter one John stressed that the basis of fellowship with God is walking in the light and confessing our sins. When we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus continually cleanses us from all our sins. However, we must acknowledge those sins and confess them in order to continue our fellowship with Him in the light.

In chapter two John shows that our fellowship is not only *with* God and His Son Jesus Christ, but our fellowship is *in* Jesus Christ who is our Advocate and our abiding place.

### OUTLINE OF 1 JOHN 2

- I. Christ is Our Advocate - 1 John: 2:1-2
- II. Christ is Our Abiding Place - 1 John: 2:3-27

#### I. Christ is Our Advocate - 1 John: 2:1-2

In the first verse of chapter two, John states that his purpose in what he has written thus far is *that you may not sin*. Jesus' death and resurrection did more than just remove the guilt of our sin. Through Him we also receive empowerment to resist sin. John encourages us to yield to that power so we might overcome sin. However, John recognizes the sinful nature of humankind and the temptations of the world. He realizes that sin is inevitable. The good news he now has to share is that God has provided a remedy for those who sin and confess it. The remedy is that *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous*.

- A. For Sinners - 1 John 2:1

The Greek word which is translated *Advocate* is "parakletos," meaning literally "one who is called alongside to help." The idea is of a defense counsel interceding on behalf of someone who is guilty and needy. Who is this Advocate? The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus Christ is our *merciful and faithful High Priest* who is able to aid those who are tempted and that He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 2:17 and 7:25). The apostle Paul speaks of *Christ at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us* (Romans 8:34). As sinners we have no case to plead before God to gain forgiveness for our own sins. Jesus Christ, the righteous Son of God, who has no sin of His own, is uniquely qualified to come to our aid and act as our defense attorney, our Advocate. The best news is that He never loses a case!

- B. As the Propitiation - 1 John 2:2

*Propitiation* denotes an atoning sacrifice, the means of making reparation for sin and wiping out guilt. This is the word upon which Jesus' legal case is built. Jesus Christ is not only our Advocate who intercedes, but He is also the atoning sacrifice who has made satisfaction for our sin. *The wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23), and Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for our sin. The basis of His plea as our Advocate is what He has done for us in sacrificing Himself for our sins. He pleads our case with confidence and power, knowing that He has paid the price for the remission of our sins.

#### II. Christ is Our Abiding Place - 1 John 2:3-27

John uses the word *abide* ten times in the remainder of the chapter, showing how believers are to abide in Christ and allow His Word to continually abide in them. *Abide* is the Greek word "meno" which can also be translated "dwell", "continue", "remain", or "stay". It is closely related to the noun "mone" which means "abode". We are to abide in Christ because He is our abode, our dwelling place. Just as those who abide (dwell, continue, remain, or stay) in an earthly house must live by the house rules, those who abide in Christ must live by His rules, obey Him, follow Him, and hope in Him.

- A. Obey Him - 1 John 2:3-4

The test of knowing God is whether we keep His commandments. To abide in Christ is to live in conformity with Christ's teachings in the gospels. The sure sign of knowing God will be seen in an obedient life-style. As a Christian learns to obey Christ more and more, he will have the confidence of knowing he abides in Him.

- B. Follow Him - 1 John 2:5-27

- 1. Walk as He Walked - 2:6

Abiding in Christ means to follow the example He has set and the commands He has given. In John 13:15 Jesus said, *I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*. In 1 Peter 1:15, the apostle Peter wrote, *as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct*. In 1 Peter 2:21, he wrote that *Christ left us an example that we should follow His steps*. John exhorts his readers to *walk just as He walked* (1 John 2:6). Christians are to speak and act just as Jesus would do if He were here in their place. A

Christian's life should not be a reflection of the world, of another person, or even of one's self. A Christian's life should be a reflection of Jesus. John goes on to show that this involves loving one another and learning to discern the truth.

## 2. Love others - 2:7-11

### a. An old but new commandment - 2:7-8

Jesus had given a *new commandment* which is recorded in John 13:34. That commandment is to love one another. It is an *old commandment* because it has been in existence *from the beginning* — from the time Jesus Himself taught His followers here on earth. It is also new because it is now written on the hearts of all believers by the Holy Spirit and is continually being worked out and actualized in the everyday lives of Christians. In this way, the *old commandment* is always in the process of gaining fresh insight and meaning, making it also a *new commandment*.

### b. Abiding in the Light - 2:8-11

John associates this new commandment with the *light*. From our study of I John 1:5-7, we have already seen that Jesus' coming brought light into this dark world. He is the *true light* which is already shining (1 John 2:8). The one who loves his brother abides in the light of Jesus and need not fear stumbling (succumbing to temptation or causing others to sin). However, anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness. That person is neither following Jesus nor fellowshiping with Jesus. In fact, that person *walks in darkness*. If you have ever stood in a totally dark room, you know how difficult it is to try to walk in darkness. It's hard enough to be in the dark and not know where you are but even more difficult to try to move around when you can't tell where you are going. John says the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going *because the darkness has blinded his eyes*. In other words, he is lost because he is spiritually blind.

### c. Application

John categorizes people into two classes: those who walk in light and love and those who walk in darkness and hate. In which category are you? Anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ should display a life which is characterized by love in all attitudes and actions. How do you show God's love to others? Would others categorize you as a loving person? What will you do this week to show God's love to someone else?

## 3. Learn discernment - 2:12-27

If you were going on a mountain climbing expedition,

you would certainly be wise to plan ahead. You would want to make sure that you had a knowledgeable guide who had been up the mountain before, knew the trail well, and would be truthful with you in explaining all you needed to know. You would check your pack to make sure you had everything necessary for the trip, and you would make sure you were physically able to meet the demands of the expedition. In the same way, a Christian must be discerning and prepared to meet the demands of walking as Jesus walked. In this passage we are called to be prepared by being aware of our spiritual blessings and anointing and to discern and beware of worldliness and deceivers.

### a. Be aware of spiritual blessings - 2:12-14

In these verses John addresses three different groups — children, fathers, and young men. His reference is probably not directed to three groups of people according to age or station in life, but rather to spiritual blessings which are represented by three different stages of life. Believers begin their spiritual life with the knowledge that their sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ (1 John 2:12). Then they grow to know Christ and fellowship with Him (1 John 2:13a and 14a). As a result, they become like strong young men who have the word abiding in them so they overcome the attacks of satan (1 John 2:13b and 14b).

John is simply reminding his readers of the powerful blessings believers possess. He is writing this letter of encouragement and exhortation to remind and to reassure. Discernment begins by knowing the spiritual blessings that are yours and being aware of the power that this knowledge provides.

### b. Beware of worldliness - 2:15-17

John cautions his readers against love of the world (Greek "kosmos") because the world is antagonistic toward God. The world is in darkness and under the control of the evil one (John 1:5; 12:46; 12:31; 14:30 and I John 5:19). Consequently, it is impossible for a Christian to love God and love the world at the same time. *Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God* (James 4:4). *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon* (Matthew 6:24). The Bible makes it clear that love of the world precludes love for God. When your soul becomes hampered with the burden of earthly desires, you lose sight of the great blessings which are yours in the spiritual realm. The more you allow your heart to give in to worldly desires, the further you draw your heart away from God.

To further explain just why the love of the world is not compatible with love for God, John sums up worldly antagonism to God under three headings:

1. *The lust of the flesh* — selfish desire, including sexual immorality, gluttony, thirst for power or control, etc.

2. *The lust of the eyes* — the greed which is aroused by what one sees, as of material or sensual things.

3. *The pride of life* — the insolent self-assurance which shows contempt for God and His laws, including deliberate sin.

John concludes his warning by pointing out that it is foolish to love the world anyway because the world and all its pleasures are passing away. *The darkness is passing away* (1 John 2: 8). Jesus has come, the light is already shining, and only those who walk in that light by doing the will of God will abide forever. Discernment lies in differentiating between the permanent and that which is passing away. A discerning person follows the will of God rather than following the ways of the world. Are you investing your life in what is permanent or in those things which are passing away? True discernment will lead to detachment from the world and attachment to God by daily and moment by moment giving oneself over to the will of God.

c. Beware of deceptions - 2:18-23

John speaks of the time as being the *last hour* just as other Bible writers speak of the *last days* (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3) or the *last times* (1 Peter 1:20 and Jude 18). The time period to which this refers probably constitutes the entire period between the first and second comings of Jesus. That is certainly how the early Christians saw it. The people of John's day were living in the last hour or last days. You and I also live in the last hour or last days.

John characterizes the *last hour* as the time when the *Antichrist* will come (v. 18). The word *antichrist*, the Greek "antichristos," can mean either "against Christ", "instead of Christ", or a combination of the two (one who claims to be Christ in opposition to Christ). The only place this word is found in scripture is in John's epistles. However, there is a person such as this, *the beast*, prophesied by John in Revelation 13; 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10. The *man of sin* or *lawless one* from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 also fits the definition of antichrist.

The specific warning in these verses is not against the Antichrist but against *many antichrists* which have already come. 1 John 2:22 says these antichrists deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In 2 John 7, John refers to them as *deceivers..... who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh*. In 1 John 4:3 he says that *every spirit that does not confess that Jesus*

*Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist*. An antichrist then, as John uses the term, is a false teacher who stands against or opposes Christ in the spirit of the Antichrist which is still to come. The many antichrists who have already come in the spirit of the Antichrist are liars (1 John 2:22) who not only deny the Son, but in doing so, also deny the Father (1 John 2:23). Jesus' statement, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me* (John 14:6), certainly supports John's conclusion.

The antichrists can easily be identified. First, they have left the church, showing they never really were a part of the body of believers (1 John 2:19). Secondly, true believers have an *anointing from the Holy One* which enables them to discern the truth (1 John 2:20). Most commentators take the anointing to refer to the Holy Spirit, but C. H. Dodd in *The Johannine Epistles* ([Moffatt New Testament Commentary](#)) argues that the anointing is the word of God which teaches the truth to believers. This viewpoint is supported by the fact that John refers to the anointing abiding in believers (1 John 2:27) the same way he speaks of the word of God or the truth abiding in them (1 John 2:14 and 2 John 2). However, the best understanding may be that the anointing is the word of God comprehended by believers through the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts (I. Howard Marshall, [The Epistles of John](#)).

In 1 Thessalonians 1:5, the apostle Paul speaks of the gospel being received, not *in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance*. In Paul's viewpoint, the reception of the word and the work of the Holy Spirit go together. The conclusion would be that a believer discerns false teaching through receiving the word of God as it is applied and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. It is necessary for believers to be grounded and growing in their knowledge of the word of God through personal Bible study in order to discern true teaching from that which is false.

d. Be aware of the anointing which abides in you - 2:24-27

The key word in this section is *abide*. John's exhortation is *let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning* (1 John 2:24). The reference must be to what the apostle Paul calls *the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation* (Ephesians 1:13). This is what all believers heard from the beginning and what brought about a change in each of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. The word of truth is to abide in us, continue in us, and be always present and active in our lives. That is why Bible study and memorization of Scripture is so important. As the word abides in you, then you also will abide in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2:24). And the promise of eternal life is yours (1 John 2:25).

John has written these warnings to prevent deception by false teachers. In 1 John 2:27, he seems to be warning against the early Gnostic teaching that there was a secret knowledge, beyond Scripture, which could only be imparted by a previously enlightened person. Believers are not to be deceived by such claims because *the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you* (1 John 2:27). As the Word of God is applied to the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit, it abides there, teaches us, keeps us on the track of truth, and keeps us abiding in Christ. The result is an inner discernment.

You do not need another person to give you special spiritual enlightenment. Are you aware of the anointing which abides in you? Are you aware that as you are studying, reading your Bible, and answering your questions daily, you are obeying John's exhortation to *let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning* (1 John 2:24)? Furthermore, as you abide in the word of God daily, and the Holy Spirit applies the truth to your heart and mind, you can have confidence that you are abiding in Him, the place of all truth. The importance of regular personal Bible study cannot be overemphasized. Jesus said, *For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect* (Matthew 24:24). *Take heed that you not be deceived* (Luke 21:8).

#### C. Hope in Him - I John 2:28-29

Abiding in Christ is a necessary characteristic of children of God, and John closes this section by calling his readers to abide in Him. The reason given is that He is coming again. This would be part of the truth which was heard from the beginning (verse 24). When He appears, those who abide in Him will welcome Him with confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame. That is the great hope and encouragement of all Christians. Those who fellowship with Christ now, abiding in Him, may look forward to eternal fellowship with Him when He comes again. Those who refuse Him now face eternal separation from Him.

Those who possess this great hope and encouragement live righteous lives because Jesus, whom they follow and in whom they abide, is righteous. Righteous living is a sign of being born of Him (1 John 2:29). Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, of the necessity of spiritual rebirth (John 3:3-8). The apostle Paul wrote, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17). The apostle Peter wrote, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* (1 Peter 1:3 NASB). Have you been born again? Is this exemplified in your life by a righteous way of living?

#### Applications:

1. How does God's gift of eternal life affect your daily life?
2. If you knew Christ was coming again this very day, how would you feel? Would you be excited and ready? Or would you be ashamed that you had not lived in fellowship with Him?
3. Has the study of this chapter given you assurance that you have the ability to discern true teaching from false teaching? What will you do that is necessary in order to gain that assurance?
4. Does the word of God abide in you through daily Bible reading, study and memorization?