

September 10, 2017-

I John 1:5- 10 - “Keeping Fellowship with God”

Introduction:

Gary Patrick tells an interesting story of a quarter-horse named Ben that he used to ride. Ben had been trained as a polo horse. His trainers trained him to do a very interesting thing. Whenever a rider got off of Ben they taught him to remain by the rider’s side when the rider dismounted. Anytime you got out of the saddle and off of Ben he would follow you like a puppy. It did not matter how fast you walked or what you did, Ben would stay behind you. He would follow your every step. Comparably, God created us to do the same thing? He created us to follow his steps. John teaches that it is paramount that a believer keeps in step with God. A believer should desire to walk with God. My goal this morning is to help you understand what it means to keep in step or fellowship with God. We need close fellowship with God. Therefore, it is vital for us to learn how to stay close to God, which involves three things.

First to keep in step we must:

I. Walk in The Light (vv. 5-7a).

1. God is light, this means He is absolutely holy, His nature is of awesome majesty and splendor. It is God’s essential nature of moral perfection, purity, and holiness. “God is light.” is a positive statement but note John uses the negative, “In Him is no darkness at all.” In the Greek this is a double negative. John tells us that God is more than just light. There is no darkness (evil) at all in Him. There is none, not any, not a speck of darkness in God at all. The basis of fellowship is this light. God is light in Him is no darkness at all.

2. In this verse light refers to what is holy and righteous; darkness refers to what is sinful and evil. This letter was written to Christians in a world where there was a real fear of darkness. Evil was associated with it. If there is sin in our lives, we cannot have fellowship with God because He will not allow any sin to come into His presence. Light and darkness cannot exist together in the same place.

Psa 139:12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light [are] both alike [to thee].

Illustration: In the early days of the energy shortage of our country when the cities turned off the street lights the crime rate rose in those cities. They had to leave the street lights on in order to reduce the crime rate.

3. He says: in verse #6 “You claim to be sons of God, Light has enlightened you; do your actions show this?” As modern day Christians, we need to ask ourselves the same questions John asked these early Christians. If we claim to have fellowship with God who is light, how can we have darkness (evil) in our lives? Some of the deeds we do, some of the things we say some of our attitudes reflect darkness not light. We must scrutinize our hearts

There were many false teachers in John's day, (Gnostic believed they had transcended it all.) also in our day, they teach we can have fellowship with God and still walk in darkness, or sin. But, God's Word is clear. There are a lot of people who say that they have fellowship with God but don't because their actions or lack of it say otherwise. If we say that we have fellowship with God and still gossip, harbor bitterness, use filthy language, steal things at work, are unfaithful to our spouse, etc., God says we are liars. The basis for fellowship with God is walking in the light, which means obeying His Holy Word.

...The book of 1 John is really a response to that heresy that came to be known as Gnosticism, the response to that misdirection or deviation from the path of Jesus onto some other thing.

4. John goes on to teach if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (1:7a). The word "walk" "peripato" means- to make one's way, progress; to make due use of opportunities, it depicts the totality of one's life-style-every attitude adopted, every word spoken, every decision made, every facet of living.

We cannot be out of fellowship with or have hard feelings toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and be in fellowship with God at the same time. Jesus emphasized this in **John 13:35**. If we have no desire to go to church or be with other believers, something is wrong with our fellowship with God. In walking with God is to love other people. When we walk in the light and have fellowship with God, two things will be true in our lives.

1. (1 Jn 1:7b). The word "**cleanseth**" is present tense, stressing the need for daily cleansing of those who walk in the light. When we fellowship with God, we are very sensitive to sin. This verse tells us Jesus' blood will cleanse us from all sin-not some sin or just "minor" sins-but all sin. In case we think we don't sin after becoming Christians, John writes:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1:8).

No matter how hard we try, we cannot be completely pure and sinless. To stay in fellowship with God, we must on a regular basis and ask God to examine our hearts and minds. Why do we need to ask God to examine our hearts? - **Psalm 139:24**

Why can't we just examine ourselves, and then confess our sins to God? This won't work because of what Jeremiah declares 17:9. This means we don't see our own sins as we do the sins of others. When we gossip, it is just so people can pray more intelligently. When we have bitterness and resentment in our hearts, it is justifiable. In our own hearts we legitimize, rationalize spiritualize our own sins. Therefore, we need to ask God to search our deceitful hearts.

2. If sin were no longer a problem for a believer you would think God would pass over the subject. However, the opposite is true. God includes many examples of believers who struggled against sin. He does not gloss over this subject. - Peter denied the Lord. - Abraham lied to protect himself. - Moses was overcome with anger. - David committed adultery. - Noah got drunk and exposed himself. - James and John were filled with jealousy.

Illustration: *A business man who was well known for his ruthless behavior once told Mark Twain, “Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top.” Mark Twain said, “I have a better idea. You could stay in Boston and keep them.”

* Sometimes our words and our actions do not coincide. A U.S. News and World Report survey found 88% of American adults are certain they are going to heaven. Ironically, only sixty seven percent are actually certain there is a heaven.

Many Christians deceive themselves by calling their sin something else. We call it “mature entertainment”; God calls it evil thoughts (Mt 15:19). We call it “adult” language; God calls it filthy communication (Col. 3:8). We call it a “harmless affair”; God calls it adultery (Mt 5:27-28). We are so eager to be tolerant and open-minded we legitimize and glamorize sin.

The truth is we all continue to sin, so to stay close to God, we must scrutinize our hearts, analyze our lives, and ...We must verbalize our sin (1:9-10).

3. When we do sin, we have this wonderful promise: **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9).** Once we have examined our hearts and lives and let the Holy Spirit of God expose our sin, we must express, or confess, our sin to God. The word translated “confess” (HOMOTOGEO, homo-log-eh-oh) means “to say the same thing.” It means we agree with what God says about our sin.

a. **Confess it personally.** But how should we confess our sin? We must confess our sins, not someone else’s). We can’t play the blame game and claim it was because of our friends or that we were victims of circumstance.

b. **Confess it specifically.** Don’t just pray, “Lord, I have sinned; forgive me.” If your sin is gossip, ask God to forgive your gossip.

c. **Confess it confidently.** The promise of God’s Word is: (1 Jn 1:9) The word faithful means God always keeps His promises because God is holy, righteous, and never lies, it is his nature.

Conclusion:

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. We are not to play at sin or take it lightly. Gary Richmond, In a *View from the Zoo*, a former zoo keeper, had this to say: “Raccoons go through a glandular change at about 24 months. After that they often attack their owners. Since a 30 pound raccoon can be equal to a 100 lb. dog in a scrap. I felt compelled to mention the change coming to a pet raccoon owned by a young friend of mine, Julie. She listened politely as I explained the coming danger. I’ll never forget her answer, “It will be different for me. . . .” And she smiled as she added, “Bandit wouldn’t hurt me. He just wouldn’t.” “Three months later Julie underwent plastic surgery for facial lacerations sustained when her adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason. Bandit has since been released into the wild.” Sin too often comes dressed in an adorable guise, and as we play with it, how easy it is to say, “It will be different for me.”