

1st John 1:7-8: Fellowship, Light & Truth

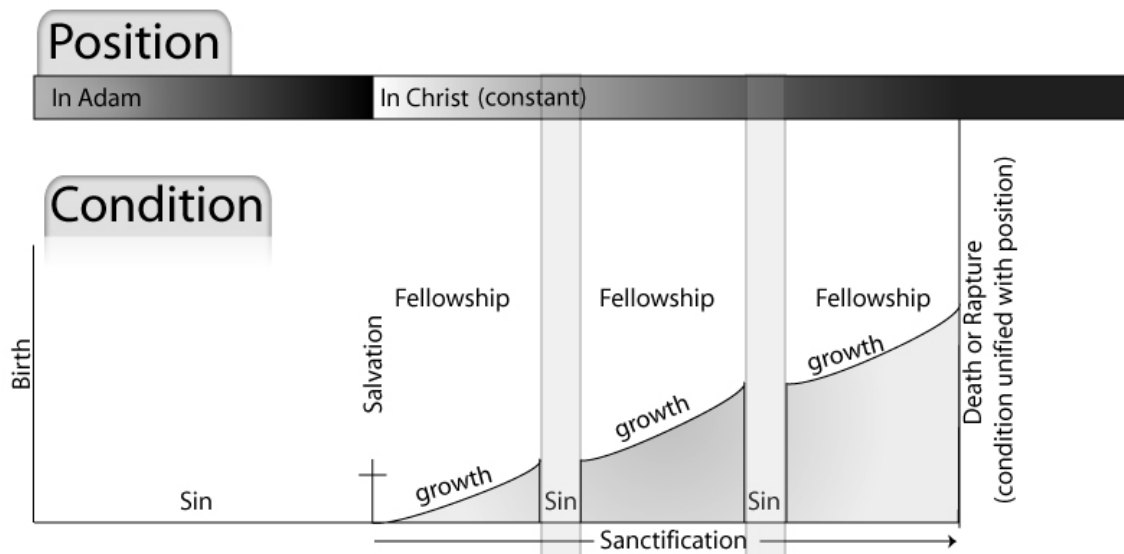
⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

“If” Presents Potential

As discussed in the last class many of 1st John 1’s propositions are based on the subjunctive mood, which speaks of the possibility of something.

- 3 starts off with the potential of fellowship between the believers
- 4 reverences the potential of the joy being full
- 6 leads into the possibility that we say we’re having fellowship, but in reality we’re potentially walking in the darkness
- 7 continues on with the potential of walking in the light
- 8 speaks of the potential problem of saying we have no sin
- 9 presents the possibility of us having our sins pardoned and that the blood could potentially be cleansing us from all unjust acts
- 10 closes the chapter with the possibility that we might say we have no sin, but with a consequence if the conditional “if” happens to be true.

John presents the concepts not as the third person plural [them but not me], but instead writes of the fellowship, and things that might block that fellowship, from the first person plural [we, as humans].



If We Walk In the Light

Walking was a Hebrew idiom for lifestyle. God tells Moses in Exodus 16:4 that He will send the manna to test to see if the Israelites will walk in His instructions. The Law was an entire system to be walked in (Exodus 18:20; Leviticus 26:3) in contrast to other worldly systems that could be walked out (Leviticus 18:3). This is a pretty radical contrast in theology.

What are the differences between walking in the statutes that reflect God's righteousness and walking in the Light of God's righteous fellowship?

Upon presenting us with the condition of potential sin via lying in verse 6 John presents the contrary position of walking in the Light as God is in the light and the potential of the fellowship with one another. Fellowship, which he began referencing in verse 3, has these qualities:

- Inclusive Qualities
 - Rooted in Christ (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 1:9;10:16)
 - Participants are co-partners (Acts 2:42)
 - Co-contributors (2 Corinthians 6:14; 9:13)
 - Receive the benefits of the bond of the fellowship (Acts 2:45)
 - Ambassadors of the fellowship (Acts 2:46-47;1st John 1:3)
- Exclusive Qualities
 - Those who are not in the fellowship do not have any rights among the participants

Fellowship with Consequences

The fellowship should start between the believers and God as individuals. The side effect of the Holy Spirit working in the believer through that Light based fellowship is the richness of fellowship between believers. Even further there is a pattern of being a light and outreach to the world. Not fellowship with the world, but a positive outreach. This pattern was seen in Acts and is part of the biblical requirements for elders (1st Timothy 3:7).

The Cleansing Blood

The reference to the cleansing blood of Christ is not conditional but over-arching for all believers for every sin and John will repeat principle this in verse 9.

*What is the significance of the blood?
How does this blood tie into Genesis 3?*

So You Say You Have No Sin

John's doctrine of fellowship with God and the body has no room for the idea of man's being righteous in his own estimation. If sin separates non-believers from God relationally, then ignoring the sin issue does not make the separation go away.

Worse yet is the idea that people would reject the truth and attempt to cover it up. Adam & Eve started this in the garden. They attempted to say they had no sin, they were just naked, but God saw them in their lies. Death entered the world and God began salvation by faith that very day (Genesis 3:21). Romans 1:18-19 tells us that men suppress their knowledge of God in an attempt to justify themselves in their own eyes.

John 17:17 tells us of Christ's prayer for the church [the Real Lord's Prayer for Believers]: Sanctify them in truth; Your word is truth. Those who are lost have rejected the truth, and they have rejected the word.

Restatement of the Passage

6 Relationship without abiding is living a lie and the reality of our practice will be shown as that lie. Our *fellowship* with God is broken [but our relationship remains unchanged].

7 If we walk in God's glorious light, we embrace the fellowship with Him and one another, and rejoice in the side effect of grace: His Son's cleansing blood.

8 However, if we arrogantly proclaim we have no sin, we're self-deceived and we have no understanding of truth.