

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

1JOHN

SHARON CRAVENS

1John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

1John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

Just as in the gospel of John, he starts with the beginning from the human perspective; God had no beginning. This time he emphasizes that this Word (the Christ) he had heard with his own ears, seen with his own eyes, and touched with his own hands; he is giving an eyewitness account. The Word of life had appeared in the flesh. This Christ is the way to eternal life (as opposed to eternal damnation—it's eternal either way). In fact, "that eternal life" is another identification for Jesus, who was with the Father and then appeared to us (His disciples).

1John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

I would assume that the "we" referred to in the first three verses makes reference to the other apostles as well as His disciples/followers. The reason they are proclaiming the truth is "that ye also may have fellowship with us." The center (focus, common denominator) of that fellowship is "God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ." They are writing this message as an expression of their joy—which they want to share.

As I read through this book again, I noticed that John gave several reasons for writing this letter; and the first is in verse 4.

- That your joy may be *full* (Gr-complete, to cram)
- That ye sin not (2:1)
- Because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake (2:12)
- Because ye have known Him from the beginning (2:13)
- Because ye have overcome the wicked one (2:13)
- Because ye have known the Father (2:13)
- Because ye are strong and the Word of God abideth in you (2:14)
- Because ye know the truth (2:21)
- To warn of educating spirits (2:26)
- That ye may know that ye have eternal life (5:13)
- That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (5:13)

These are all statements directed toward people who are true believers. In fact, the focus in this book is one of being an overcomer and having Christ in you. Only a true believer can experience "full joy." Only a true believer can learn to experience victory over sin. Only a true believer has had their sins forgiven because of Christ. Only a true believer recognizes the God of Creation—Father,

Son and Spirit. Only a true believer can be victorious against the enemy—Satan. Only a true believer can know God as “Father.” Only a true believer can find strength in the power of the Word of God. Only a true believer can experience the freedom and liberty that comes from “knowing” (Gr – understanding) the truth (as given in the Word of God). Only true believers can expect to recognize and avoid the attempts of seducing spirits to wreak havoc in their lives. Only true believers can have confidence in their eternal future in the presence of God. Only true believers would place their faith in the name of the Son of God—the name being representative of the person.

John is writing this letter to encourage and strengthen believers in their walk of faith.

1John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

The message John is sharing originated from Christ; he is just passing on what he was taught.

“God is light” – Light illuminates is my first thought.

1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts:

That means it reveals what is good, which, in turn, also shows what is bad.

John 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Ephesians 5:13 But all things that are reprove are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

“in him is no darkness at all” – Darkness is associated with evil, scary and “lack of illumination.”

Job 22:11 Or darkness, *that* thou canst not see...

Absolutely nothing associated with darkness is a part of God.

I decided to do a word search on *light* and *darkness* to see what things are associated with each in scripture.

Light (remembering “God is light”):

- Is good
Genesis 1:4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good....
- Gives direction
Exodus 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:
John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.
- Gives pleasure
Ecclesiastes 11:7 Truly the light *is* sweet, and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes to behold the sun:

- Is associated with God's presence
Daniel 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.... and the light dwelleth with him.
1Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto....
- Accompanies understanding and wisdom
Daniel 5:14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.
- Allows vision
Matthew 6:22 The light of the body is the eye...
- Is equated with life
John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Is equated with armor (Armor provides protection. The word for *armour* in this verse references an offensive weapon.)
Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.
- Is associated with the knowledge of God
2Corinthians 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Darkness is associated with:

- horror
Genesis 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.
- death
Job 10:21 Before I go *whence* I shall not return, *even* to the land of darkness and the shadow of death...
- evil
Job 30:26 When I looked for good, then evil came *unto me*: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.
- the wicked
Proverbs 4:19 The way of the wicked *is* as darkness...
- sorrow
Isaiah 5:30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and* sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.
- weeping and pain
Matthew 8:12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- spiritual wickedness
Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.
- no sense of direction
John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.
- the Day of the Lord
Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end *is* it for you? the day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light.
Amos 5:20 *Shall* not the day of the LORD *be* darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
- hate
1John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
- God's presence
Ex. 20:21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*.
Deuteronomy 5:23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders...
1Kings 8:12 Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

I admit that this one is a bit confusing and plan to do some further study on this point. It is so obviously not connected to the other references that it must represent truth beyond the obvious. All of these references have to do with God's presence in the cloud that led the people of Israel. Scripture states that man cannot look upon God and live.

Ex. 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

I tend to think it has something to do with God's mercy for His people to clothe Himself in darkness in order to dwell with them in guidance and protection.

1John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

Now John begins to speak to hearts. If we claim to have fellowship with Jesus and yet our walk (how we live) reflects things associated with darkness, we lie. That is a statement of fact with no room for the word "but." Lies and truth are direct opposites.

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

On the other hand, if how we live (our walk) reflects that which is good, pure, honest, etc., it is a proof of our part in the “fellowship” of believers. None of us is perfect. We all have faults, “occasions” of darkness (bad or evil) in our lives. John is talking about our walk, a continual process in our lives, not our steps, individual actions along the way. When our fellowship is with Jesus, we are purified (seen as clean) and without sin through the shed blood of Jesus. His blood shields our sin from the eyes of the Father. All He sees is the love and obedience of His Son.

I was listening to a teaching by Ray Stedman, and he stimulated another line of thought. Light is the key to fellowship with one another in Jesus. What are the things that we do that cause the light to grow dim and allow darkness to creep in to mar that fellowship.

- Avoid or ignore instruction received at church.
- Neglect to read God’s word.
- Neglect to spend time in communication to God in prayer.
- Isolate oneself from interaction with other believers.
- Refuse to recognize and repent of sin in our life.

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

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

None of us is without sin. Every child of God needs light.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
1Kings 8:46 If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,)
Ecclesiastes 7:20 For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Anyone who claims to be without sin is deceiving himself, which is a lie (not truth). When you claim to be without sin, you deprive yourself of a wonderful opportunity for blessing. When we confess our sins (admit that we have done wrong or not done what we should have), God is faithful (dependable and trustworthy) and just (true to His promise) and will forgive (consider as though it never happened) our sin and purify (cleanse) us from ALL unrighteousness (sin, wickedness).

Mark Hitchcock used a quote that he attributed to Dr. Toussaint that I really liked: “When we confess the sins we know of, the LORD cleanses us from “all” unrighteousness—even the sins we aren’t aware of.”

1John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Not only do we deceive ourselves when we claim that we have not sinned, we also are calling Jesus/God a liar. "The Word" is either the truth or a lie; it cannot be both.

Hebrews 6:18 "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie...."