

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtmwebsite.org Today's Date: July 13, 2025

The Basis of True Fellowship

by Dan Trygg

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard (and it still affects us), what we have seen with our eyes (and it still affects us), what we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of the life-- ² that life was revealed (it appeared, was made visible, was made tangibly-manifest), and we have seen it (and it still affects us) and we bear-witness and proclaim to you the eternal ('age-type') life that was with the Father and was revealed (it appeared, was made visible, was made tangibly-manifest) to us-- ³ what we have seen (and it still affects us) and heard (and it still affects us) we also declare to you, in order that y'all may have a sharing (communion, participation) along with us; and indeed our sharing (communion, participation) is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1:1-3

“This is the message we have heard from Him (and it still affects us) and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we might say (at a point in time) that we have a sharing (communion, participation) with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie (are fake, false, phony) and are not doing the truth; ⁷ but if ever we might be walking in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have a sharing (communion, participation) with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son continually cleanses us from every sin.” 1 John 1:5-7

I think it is fascinating that the apostle John was led to focus on our shared life, both with God and with one another. In the first few verses, he emphasized his own experience of the life that was manifested in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was both *the manifestation or demonstration of this life*, as well as *the message or proclamation of this life*. Jesus did not come to gather a group of people who were good, or self-disciplined, or devoted to religious practices. His purpose was to impart to everyday people who would trust in Him a “life” that was qualitatively different than what would be expected as “the norm”. It was a caliber of life-energy and substance that would “stand out”, because it is literally “out of this world”. It is *life of the kingdom of God, ...life of the age to come...*, poured into those who trust in and follow Jesus at the moment they believe in Him and take Him as their Lord and Savior. This “age-type life” was embodied in the Eternal Word, who was with the Father, and became flesh in the person of Jesus. He came to reveal it, ...to speak of it in His teachings, ...and to demonstrate it, by how He treated others, by the acts of power He displayed that healed people and set them free, and by His willingness to be a servant, choosing to lay His life down to make this life-from-heaven available to others.

John used very vivid, concrete and descriptive language to emphasize his personal encounters and experiences of this age-type life that was expressed through Jesus. These interactions, where he was impacted by what he saw and heard demonstrated and expressed through Jesus, had deep and lasting impact. He was never the same after that. He could not “unsee” what he saw, or “unhear” what he heard. Nor did he want to. He was captivated by what he saw and heard, and willingly chose to “come and see” more (Jn. 1:39). Ultimately, he chose to put aside his own natural life aspirations and expectations, in order to follow Jesus and fulfill His calling upon his life. He spent the next three years in close proximity to “the Life”, and, after Jesus' death and resurrection, he waited for and received the “promise of the Father”, the Holy Spirit, which Jesus poured out upon His followers, and they received the life of the age to come. At that moment, the “glory” that had been with Jesus and the Father in eternity past, was given to him and the other believers (Jn. 17:5,22). The church was born, ...a “fellowship” of believers, ...a community whose mission was to teach about and express this age-type life to one another and to the world around them, ...just as Jesus had done.

Note how John describes his ministry. He was to bear witness and proclaim to others the “age-type life” that was with the Father, and was made manifest (visible, tangible) to him and the other apostles in the person of Jesus. His purpose in this declaration was so that we might have and be having a “sharing” (communion, participation) with him and the others who had experienced what he had.

Often the word “fellowship” is used for this “sharing”, but “fellowship” sounds only like interactive communication. It is clear that what John was proclaiming, and proposing, was much more than “interactive communication”. He went on to further describe it, “...and the sharing (communion, participation) which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” The underlying Greek word here is *koinōnia*. It is from the root word, *koinos*, which means “shared, common, mutual”. *Koinōnia* is describing something that is shared, common, mutually-accessible, or equally participated in. It can be used to describe a sharing of open hearts with one another (akin to our word “fellowship”, but at a deep level). This described the readily accessible heart-sharing experienced by the early Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42,46). The same word, however, was used to describe the contribution (*koinōnia*) for the poor, ...a sharing of resources with others (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Heb. 13:16). It was said that none of the believers thought of their possessions as being their own, but all things were being “common” to them (*koinos* - i.e., shared, or accessible to all – Acts 2:44,45; 4:32). When we partake of the elements of the Lord's supper, Paul described the

drinking of the cup as a *sharing (koinōnia)* of the blood of Christ, and the eating of the bread as a *sharing (koinōnia)* of the body of Jesus (1 Cor. 10:16). Our financial support of the ministry is referred to as a participation (*koinōnia*) of the gospel (Phil. 1:5), because **we are sharing our resources to further the outreach of the message**. When we endure hardships, or are persecuted for the cause of Christ, we experience *the fellowship (sharing) of His sufferings* (Phil. 3:10). Paul wrote that **we were called by God “unto a sharing (a participation) of His Son”**, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9). **We also have a sharing or participation with (*koinōnia*) the Holy Spirit** (2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1). And, of course, here in 1 John 1:3, John says that he and other believers had **a sharing with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ**.

He proclaimed the message about this “age-type life”, or “life-of-the-age-to-come-in-the-here-and-now”, in order that **we might come to also experience that *koinōnia* that he and his compatriots were enjoying with God and with one another**. The *koinōnia* is *not* just talk, or friendly conversation. It is based upon a common reality and a shared experience, ...the life of the Spirit inside of us, ...the life of the age to come that has been infused into our beings when we were born from above. **Our job, as members of the body of Christ, is to help one another recognize and respond to this inner working of life, ...so that we too will manifest and express the life of God to the world around us**. Every one of us who knows Jesus *has* this life of the kingdom in us *now, ...already*. The problem is that we are not seeing that this is our main challenge. **This should be our focus: ...to embrace and embody the life that God has shared with us**.

John wants to help us with this. Much of the remainder of the letter is written to help us recognize what is this genuine life, and what is not. **He gives us indicators that reveal when we are walking in this life, and when we aren't**.

The first of these is found in vs. 5. Notice how he describes it: “This is the message that we heard from Him, and we announce to y'all, that **God is light, and darkness is not in Him, not at all**.” As in the gospel of John, the author uses the images of “light” and “darkness” as figurative for “good” and “evil”. So, the message that John heard, and which still affected his thinking, is this truth: **God is entirely good and righteous. There is nothing impure or evil about Him, ...not even the tiniest bit**.

How does this help us? John is very practical about this. He says, “If ever we might say (at any point in time) that we have a sharing, communion, or fellowship with God, and, at the same time are walking in the darkness, we lie (are fake, phony, pretending, ...even, 'we deceive ourselves') and we are not doing the truth (what is genuine, real).” So, **John is giving us a practical measuring stick. If there are mixed or evil motives, or we are walking in sinful behavior, then we can know that we are not “sharing in” or “abiding in” the life that is from God**. We are just kidding ourselves, or putting on an outward appearance of righteousness, which is not a true manifestation of the life of God. It is our attempt to “do what is right” in our own strength. **Since it is from us, not Him-in-us, it is a poor imitation. Given time, the truth will become apparent**. Jesus said, “You will know them by their fruit. A bad tree will eventually become evident from what it produces” (Matt. 7:16-18). The sins of some people are quite evident, ...but the sins of others appear later (1 Tim. 5:24). Jesus spoke of this, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil (sick, unhealthy, spoiled).”²⁰ **For everyone who practices evil (what is worthless, careless, indifferent) hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed (shown for what they are)**.²¹ **But the one doing the truth (what is genuine, real) comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested (shown, made evident) as having been wrought (worked, performed, brought about) in God”** (Jn. 3:19-21). Those who are *not* pure in heart avoid examination by others. Those who are filled with God, and delighted with Him, are glad to tell their story, and give praise to God for what His life in them is prompting them to do.

“If ever we might be walking in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have a sharing (communion, participation) with one another...” Jesus had prayed that we would be one, even as He and the Father are one. Notice how He defined that, “I in them, and You in Me, in order that they may be completed (or, 'brought to maturity') unto one, ...in order that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them...” (Jn. 17:21-23). Again, **our unity, our “oneness”, our “shared communion” is meant to be a visible, noticeable thing. How could this happen?** The basis for this oneness, this “fellowship” or “shared life” is the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 4:14). Jesus said, “The glory which You have given to Me, I have given to them, in order that they *might be one*, just as We are one” (Jn. 17:21). **Having the Holy Spirit is not the same as abiding in the Holy Spirit. The possibility of “oneness” or “shared-life-communion” is given to us through the indwelling Holy Spirit, ...but we must grow into it. WHEN we are walking in the Light, as He Himself is in the Light, THEN we can experience that unified, common life, ...a shared-life with Him and with one another**. And, whereas before, holding on to sin, or having mixed motives, *interfered with* the ability to walk in the Light, ...once we learn to walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we may still have sinful or errant thoughts arise, **BUT the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from each one, ...because we are NOT choosing to walk in darkness, but in the Light**. Our focus and motivation do not come from the darkness. **Our delight is in the shared-life of the Holy Spirit in the Light**. Jesus had said that we would be “perfected” or “matured” into oneness. We need not fear the Light, as those who love darkness would. **The Light will serve to expose and cleanse us from those thoughts and motives that would distract and deharmonize us. Our delight will be to testify of what God's Spirit is working in our hearts**.